

Part Three: Relationship Evangelism

*Encouraging, Equipping, and Empowering the
Wary and Slightly Fearful Disciple to
Reach Others for Christ*



Homework Review

- Any questions about last week's homework assignment?
 - Your lost list
 - The role of prayer in discipleship
 - Key scripture
 - Script review





Week 3

Go/Do

- Engage in vital conversations
- Sharing your faith story
- Presenting the gospel
- Moving to/crossing the line of faith
- The first year
- Jump starting conversations



Engage in Vital Conversations

- It amazes me how much time I spend talking to people about really trivial stuff
 - Like pole saws
 - And new restaurants
 - And what kind of smoker they have



Engage in Vital Conversations

- It's time to flip the switch
- Its time to move from the trivial



Engage in Vital Conversations



- Vital conversations are intentional conversations
- And they have a specific goal in mind ---- to create/gauge/act on people's receptivity to Christ



Engage in Vital Conversations

- The operative word is “conversation”
 - This means dialogue, not monologue
 - This means sharing with, not talking to



Critical Questions

- One of the easiest, and least-threatening ways to begin a conversation about Christ is to create and then use a series of Spirit-anointed questions
- Spiritual questions help you:
 - Get the non-believer talking...and thinking about spiritual matters
 - Gauge their level of interest and understanding



Two Resources

- 12 or so critical questions (next slide)
- Additional resource I'd be glad to send you: Questions to Help You Jump-Start Conversations About Jesus



12 Critical Questions

- **Good opening questions:**
 1. What's important to you? What excites you? What gets you up each day?
 2. What life lessons do you want to pass on to your kids?
 3. Do you ever wonder why the world is so messed up?
 4. What gives/where do you find peace?
- **Beginning the faith conversation:**
 5. Did you grow up in the church? How was that experience? **OR** What's your spiritual background?
 6. What do you believe/think about God? What has been your experience with him? How do you think he views you?
 7. Do you ever think about Heaven? Or hell? Or what kinds of people go there?
 8. What is your opinion of Jesus Christ? Do you believe that he loves you? That he died for you?
- **Moving toward a decision:**
 9. Do you ever wonder what happens when you die?
 10. If you were wrong about something and I could show you the truth would you be interested?
 11. Five seconds after we die we are going to find out if what we believe is true. How confident are you in the decisions you have made?
 12. Would you like to be certain that you are going to heaven?



Don't be afraid to create your own set or modify this set of questions

The goal is a set of questions you are totally comfortable with

Remember, fewer questions well-learned/used is better than a massive list that covers every contingency



When Using Questions

- Remember, the goal is meaningful dialogue
- Listen carefully to their response
- Show that you heard them: “I’m curious about something you said”
- Never, never, never:
 - Debate or challenge their response
 - Correct their thinking or their theology
 - Use questions to control or dominate the conversation
 - Mechanically go to the next question



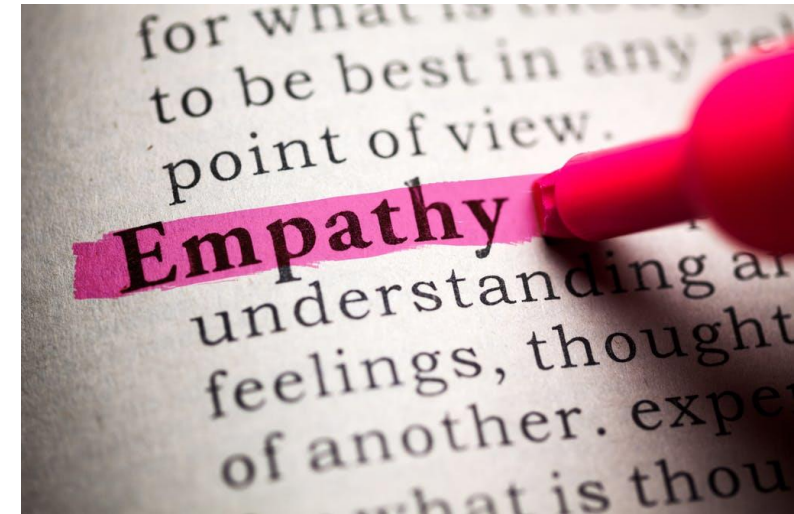
Listen Well

- Listening is not merely waiting for your turn to talk
- Instead, you are focusing on their heart → You are listening for spiritual thirst (next slide)
 - Interestingly, even as you focus on their heart, you are increasingly aware of your heart
- Let the Holy Spirit guide you to the correct response

I'm Willing to Bet the Farm That In Our
Postmodern Christian Society the Most Important
Evangelistic Skill Is Listening
—Todd Hunter

Listen Well

- Be fully in the moment
- Put yourself in their shoes
- Don't interrupt and impose your ideas or suggestions
- Don't be afraid of silence
- Validate before moving on (next slide)





Wondering Out Loud

- Pollock, in *God Space*, reminds us that one important tool is wondering out loud. In other words, our wondering leads us to deeper meaning:
 - That's an interesting perspective; I'm wondering how you arrived at that conclusion
 - I'm wondering what role religion has played in shaping your life
 - I'm wondering why the topic of God stirs up such strong emotion
 - I'm wondering how my answer to that question made you feel
 - I'm wondering what you think you would have to give up or lose to become a Christian

Being Heard is So Close to Being Loved That
For the Average Person They Are Almost
Indistinguishable – David Ausburger

Share Your Faith Story



- Eventually you will get to the point where you need to tell your faith story
- Are you ready?





A Great Faith Story

- Remember, a great faith story includes:
 - My life before I trusted Christ
 - How I came to know Christ
 - The turning point, motivation, catalyst, event
 - My life after knowing Jesus



Share Your Faith Story

- Focus on the conflict; the issue(s) that initiated your faith journey
- Highlight God's presence and power (keep Him centered)
- Make sure you stress the point of change (before and after)
 - From hate-filled to accepting God's love
 - From loneliness to a sense of belonging
 - From anxiety to peace
- Be clear about the source of your transformation



Simple Guidelines

- Let your joy shine through
- Communicate with humility
- Avoid lingo and religion-ese
- Stick to the highlights. Keep it short. Let them ask for more
 - Three to five minutes is good. Remember, this isn't about you
- Talk to them like you would a friend (don't preach, don't talk down, don't argue)



The Very Best Outcome

“Bob, remember the other day when you told me how Jesus had changed your life? I’ve been thinking about something you said...”

I’ve been
Thinking
About...



Sample Faith Stories

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rA3n2zZILdw> – Jennifer Fulwiler
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BCAItdBidhw> – J. Warner Wallace
- My Train Wreck Conversion – Rosario Butterfield
 - <https://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2013/january-february/my-train-wreck-conversion.html>
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jVTTsD9o1IM>



Share Your Faith Story

- Resources:
 - <https://bible.org/seriespage/my-faith-story-worksheet>
 - <https://www.cru.org/us/en/train-and-grow/share-the-gospel/evangelism-principles/how-to-tell-your-story-worksheet.html>
 - http://www.evergreenchurches.us/images/uploads/How_to_Write_Your_Personal_Faith_Story.pdf
 - <https://www.thoughtco.com/how-to-write-your-christian-testimony-701445>
 - http://www.cslewisinstitute.org/webfm_send/334



Using Scripture

- The “scripts” outlined in the appendix are all built on Scripture
- When we get people into the Bible something supernatural happens
 - A single passage that connects with the heart is worth more than a lifetime of sermons
 - For the word of God is alive and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart – Hebrews 4:12



Using Scripture

- **Ask permission:**
 - Would you mind if we take a look at what the Bible has to say?
- **Have them read the passage:**
 - Would you feel comfortable reading these verses out loud?
- There is power in the spoken word but don't press the issue. You don't want folks to dis-engage.

Using Scripture



- Keep the focus on the passage:
 - After reading these verses I'm wondering if you were surprised or intrigued by anything you read?
 - Did you glean any insights you want to share?
- **Note:** If you aren't good at finding passages quickly, it might be good to carry a small topical Bible or tablet with key Scripture identified

Share Graciously



- Give of yourself
 - Share how you have grappled with some of the same questions and issues your friend is grappling with
 - Share your life including mistakes and miscues (but avoid inappropriate or distracting information)
 - Let them know that you are still a work in progress (WIP)



If You Are Asked a Question

- ...Don't fake it
- Respond: Do you mind if I spend a little time doing some research before we meet again?
 - This actually gives you a reason to meet again
- When you next meet: During our last conversation you raised several things that I felt unqualified to address. So I found this resource...

Deliberately Move Your Friend to the Line of Faith

- Remember, you must be highly intentional
 - Your goal is not just to have a relationship; your goal is to help lead someone to Christ
 - Not therapy, but theology



The Fork in the Road

- Eventually your conversation, and even relationship, will come to a fork in the road
 - Do you sense that the person is moving toward a decision?
 - Or is the person not ready, or perhaps not willing, to make a decision?
- First, let's talk about the person who is moving toward a decision first





Moving Toward a Decision

- You know that someone is nearing a decision when their questions and discussion shift from being academic and intellectual to personal (more use of the personal pronoun)
 - I need to change
 - I need to grow
 - I need something in my personal life that is going to make a difference
- **Another indicator?** When she or he begins to ask questions about spiritual issues and is increasingly looking at the world from a spiritual perspective



Moving Toward a Decision

- When most people grasp the significant truth of the gospel all sorts of lightbulbs flicker to life:
 - I can be found like the lost son/coin/prodigal son
 - I can be cared for by a Good Shepherd, too
 - My deepest needs, like the widow's, can actually be met
 - I can receive abundant life just by an initial step of faith



The Commitment Prayer

- It is very important that the new believer offer a commitment prayer
- While a commitment prayer is not a ritual that requires specific words, it does need to cover some key elements:
 - Acknowledge that Jesus is Lord
 - Recognition that Jesus died for your sins and was raised three days later
 - A repenting of sins
 - Asking Jesus into your life



Sample Commitment Prayer

Jesus, I believe you are the Son of God, that you died on the cross to rescue me from sin and death and to restore me to the Father. I choose now to turn from my sins and to turn to you. I receive your forgiveness and ask you to take your rightful place in my life as my Savior and Lord. Come reign in my heart, fill me with your love and your life, and help me to become a person who is truly loving—a person like you. Restore me, Jesus. Live in me. Love through me. Thank you, God. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.



It's Time to Celebrate

- After your friend has prayed, it is time for you to pray
 - Affirm their commitment
 - And then celebrate
- A friend crossing the line of faith is a time for celebration
 - You have been faithful
 - A friend's eternity has been secured
- This is also a great time to think about what's next (more on this in a minute)





If Someone Can't Decide

- If their heart is clearly being softened, but they are not ready...
 - Just ask them to talk to God
 - “God, I don’t know if you are real, but if you are out there, please show yourself to me”
 - “If you are out there God, and if you love me, would you help me feel your love?”
 - “If you are real, and as powerful as people say, could you answer my prayers and meet my needs?”



Remember, no decision is a decision



If Someone Says “No”



- Hopefully this will not happen too often
- But it will happen
- And when it does, you need to step back (but not away) and give the Holy Spirit time to work
- Next slide



If Someone Says “No” – 2

- **Remember your role:** Your job is not to lead people to Christ. That’s the job of the Holy Spirit. Your job is to be faithful to Jesus when he said, “Go.”
- **Reassure the person.** When a person says ‘no’ to Jesus, it can feel like he or she is saying no to us as well. Reassure the person that you are still friends.
- **Reassess the conversation:** Many times, as we explain the gospel and invite someone to respond positively to Jesus, we have a limited understanding of what is actually going on in his or her head and heart.



If Someone Says “No” – 3

- **Re-Ask:** Though this might be initially awkward, ask, “What is holding you back from receiving God’s love today?” or “Can you explain what is stopping you from saying yes to Jesus?” Frame the ‘re-ask’ around the positive elements of the good news. This can help people see what they are actually saying no to.
- **Continue to pray for the person:** Pray that their eyes would be open and Satan would be thwarted.
- **If they are receptive, and the Holy Spirit is still leading you, continue to meet**

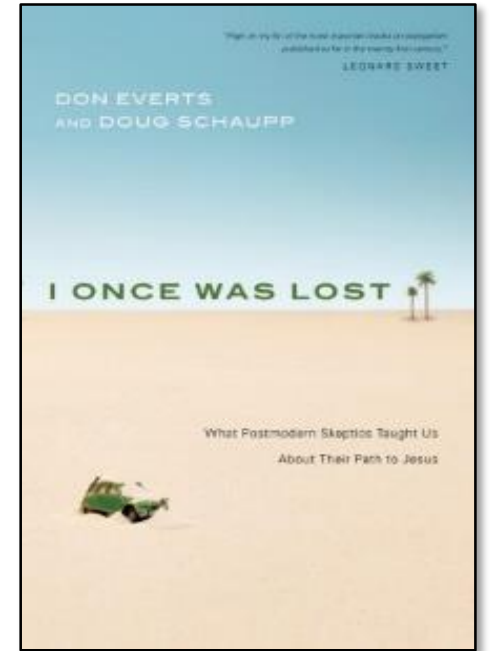


Next Steps for You

- Make sure the new believer has a Bible with specific passages/chapter highlighted
- Begin reading the Bible (John is a great place to start) and praying
- Help them understand that there will be ups and downs
- Talk to them about their relationships with the unbelievers in their lives
- The first year (next slide)

I Once Was Lost – The First Year

- Help your friend secure their decision
- Help them develop key kingdom habits:
 - Match them with a spiritual mentor
 - Get them praying
 - Get them studying Scripture (intro Bible study)
 - Get them connected with community/fellowship
 - Get them to tell their big story
 - Get them serving in some way



Things I Do to Jump Start Conversations

1. Put out a Christian book on the table/desk where I am working
2. Wear my Casas por Cristo hat in public
3. Hold a Matthew party
4. Ask people about their tattoo
5. Practice random acts of kindness
6. Practice restaurant prayers
7. Don't promise to pray for someone, pray with someone
8. Just walk across the room
9. Any other ideas?



resources ↵

Scroll
Lock

Pause

Insert

Home

Sources – Web

- <https://www.evangelismcoach.org/what-is-relational-evangelism/>
- Podcast - <https://www.evangelismcoach.org/expert-interview-jeff-johnson-personality-based-evangelism/>
- <https://www.evangelismcoach.org/a-comparison-of-3-evangelism-methods/>
- <http://theeverlastingfallout.com/ingredients-for-relational-evangelism/>
- A Study of Personal Evangelism:
<http://www.padfield.com/acrobat/taylor/personal-evang.pdf>
- <http://www.4stepstosalvation.com/>
- <https://www.theopedia.com/gospel-presentations>

Sources - Books

- Aldrich – *Lifestyle Evangelism*
- Bechtle – *Evangelism for the Rest of Us: Sharing Christ within Your Personality Style*
- Everts and Schaupp – *I Once Was Lost: What Postmodern Skeptics Taught Us About Their Path to Jesus*
- Hybels – *Becoming a Contagious Christianity*
- Hybels – *Just Walk Across the Room*
- McCloskey – *Tell It Often-Tell It Well: Making the Most of Witnessing Opportunities*
- Newman – *Questioning Evangelism*
- Pollard – *Evangelism Made Slightly Less Difficult: How to Interest People who Aren't Already Interested*
- Pollock – *God Space - Where Spiritual Conversations Happen Naturally*
- Richardson – *Reimagining Evangelism: Inviting Friends on a Spiritual Journey*