

Conversations That Connect

Word

Scripture Reference

1 Peter 3:15

Discussion Questions

1. Share a spiritual conversation with a non-Christian that left a deep impression on you. How did you feel after that conversation?
2. There are four types of spiritual conversations that you might have with people: as a musician who you hears, as an artist who illuminates, as an archeologist who uncovers, and as a builder who builds. The first spiritual conversation is a **HEARING Conversation**. Like a musician, you hear the sour notes that people are “singing” to you. In spiritual matters, “sour notes” are the things that just do not sound right or the inconsistencies in people’s point of view. How should you handle these “sour notes”? How can you refute a point of view that differs from the Word of God with decency and respect?
 - a. *You need to listen to the inconsistency between a person’s worldview and his heart’s longing (Proverbs 27:19).* Discuss what people say that may not necessarily reflect what they long for. How would you discern the difference in order to help that person better?
 - b. *You need to listen to the inconsistency between what they say they believe and how they live or behave.* Do you agree that people believe what they want to believe in order to do what they want to do? If that person were close to you, how would you correct that person if his or her action were inconsistent with what he or she says?

- c. *You need to listen to the inconsistency between two contradictory beliefs.* How would you correct a person who believes that Jesus is the only Way, the Truth and the Life that no one comes to the Father except through Him, and yet believes that all religions are the same and all are roads to heaven?
 - d. *You need to listen to the inconsistency within a single belief or within the statement itself.* How would you react and interact with a person who would say, “I am proud that I am humble?”
3. The second spiritual conversation is an **ILLUMINATING Conversation**. Like an artist, you ask questions to help paint a picture to enable other people to see themselves more clearly. *You need to learn to ask questions in a way that surfaces doubt in nonbelievers perspective, while at the same time minimizing their defensiveness and creating a desire to want to hear more” (Dr. Geisler).* What are the usual perspectives or beliefs that non-Christians have that keep them from believing in the Lord? Give suggestions on how to handle those beliefs.
 4. The third spiritual conversation is an **UNCOVERING Conversation**. Engaging people in this type of conversation is like being an archaeologist, where you uncover their real barriers to the Gospel. *Determine if the issue that the person raised is a head issue or a heart issue.* If a person does not want God to meddle with his or her life then it is a heart issue—an issue that is not about the philosophy of faith, but the practice of faith. Have you met a person who does not want to believe in the Lord because he or she is resistant to live out the Christian faith? How would you deal with this kind of person?
 5. The fourth conversation is the **BUILDING Conversation**. Like a builder, your purpose is to build a bridge to the Gospel. You must *find a common ground towards the Gospel.* If it’s a heart issue, build a heart bridge. If it’s a head issue, build a head bridge. Give examples of heart and head issues and suggestions on how you can make bridges to deal with those issues. Why is it not sufficient to simply say, “Just have faith!” when you are dealing with a non-Christian?

Walk

1. Look back at conversation you had about God, or any spiritual matters. When you talk with people, does your conversation become a pursuit of knowing the truth together rather than proving one another wrong? Do you find a way to fight for your cause in the most decent way possible, lest you become like what you say you hate? Ask the Lord for wisdom when you talk about spiritual matters with others, especially with non-Christians.
2. Think of a person with whom you would like to share the gospel. Begin praying today for that person, and start planning how you can engage that person in a conversation that will lead him/her to Christ.

Worship & Prayer

Heavenly Father, it is Your desire that we talk about our faith with people who do not know You yet. Most of the time, I do not know what to say or how to say it. First, please help me to have compassion for those who do not know You. And then, please give me the desire to share You with them. Give me wisdom to hear, illuminate, uncover and build in my conversation with them so that I will earn their respect and the right to be heard. I pray that you will help me to take the initiative to talk with my non-Christian loved ones and to people around me about the Gospel and that they, too, will put their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ as their Savior.