

How to talk to others about Christ

Believe it or not, those friends of yours not attending church regularly might be as interested in spiritual things as you are. Most everyone has definite spiritual views and some spiritual experience. Furthermore, some feel close to God and are contented with their beliefs. Amazingly, many of them are willing to talk about their spiritual lives.

This does not mean the starting point of a discussion should be doctrine. In fact, that's a bad place to start. This causes people to brace themselves for a battle. People who do not attend a church or are nominal at best in their religious practice need to be drawn out, not turned out. We need to find ways that will draw us into their lives and into their ways of thinking. To draw them out we need to ask them open-ended questions that show them respect and help us to identify with them.

The questions we use will depend upon the context we find ourselves in with the person. Not all questions will work in all circumstances. But here are some that may be helpful in approaching a discussion of things spiritual:

- ✓ What turns you off about religion?
- ✓ What do you think God is like?
- ✓ When have you felt closest to God
- ✓ What person has been the most influential on your beliefs and values?

At this point we must listen carefully to the answers. This may be difficult, but remember we are listening in order to understand, not correct. We are listening to get feelings, reactions, and motivations. The point is to understand what the person believes and why. Once we know the person's perspective, we can introduce corresponding information from the Bible. The Bible is loaded with parables, impacting stories and genuine human experiences with which anyone can relate. After that, we can help identify their spiritual needs and determine what direction to take. This could mean praying, answering questions, agreeing to talk again, or inviting the person to a prayer meeting.

This is a conversation all of us will find comfortable. The person we are talking with will find it particularly easy because we were respectful, listened from the beginning, and approached scripture from their perspective. In this way we led the person a step or two closer to the Master.