

Class Meeting 5

Chapter 7 – *The Art of Asking Questions of People with Different Worldviews*

A Little Review

Evangelism – Every day and in _____ helping an unbeliever take
_____ closer to _____.

Role of the Musician – Listening for the _____ people are singing.

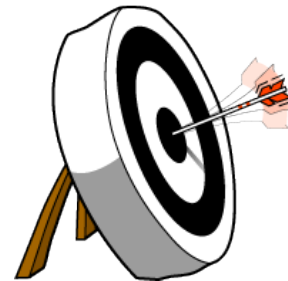
Role of the Artist – Painting a picture of what a person _____.

Role of the Archaeologist – Uncovering _____ to the Gospel.

Role of the Builder – Building a _____ to Jesus.

Remember the Goal!

Don't get so caught up in removing barriers that you forget to remember the goal!



The Goal

“We are destroying speculation and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God.” (2 Corinthians 10:5)

Conversational Evangelism Model (in a nutshell)

We want to “HEAR” their discrepancies and then ILLUMINATE them by asking QUESTIONS that will “CLARIFY” their religious terminology and “expose” the weaknesses of their perspective.

Then we want to UNCOVER THE REAL BARRIERS and “BUILD” a bridge to help them take one step closer to Jesus Christ each day. (1 Corinthians 3:6)

Dialogue How?

How we dialogue with others will depend on their worldview.

Tips to Removing Barriers

1. Work through issues with others on their timetable.
2. Understand their worldview perspective.
3. Encourage them to question whether their foundation is adequate.
4. Focus your questions on those things that stand out the most.
5. Understand some of the basic evidence for the Christian faith.
6. Identify some key questions to ask.
7. Ask God for wisdom.

Reflection

1. Witnessing is more difficult today partly because our Christian beliefs go radically against the grain of our culture. We not only need to know what to say to people, but also how to communicate it so that we receive the greatest possibility of our message being heard and accepted.
2. We must especially be careful not to come across as argumentative, boastful, arrogant, condescending, or insensitive. We must also learn to ask questions in the most prudent way so that our dialogue is constructive.
3. The best way to determine which questions will be the most effective in witnessing to our nonbelieving friends is to understand their worldview perspective.
4. Different underlying worldview assumptions can account for differences in perspectives and can lead to strong disagreements. So your friend may look at the evidence you present to him and come to radically different conclusions. Keep this in mind if you reach an impasse in your discussion with someone.
5. Finding the right question to ask to surface the discrepancies in people's religious beliefs is not always easy when they mix worldviews together and don't hold their religious views consistently.
6. Though some people might dispute the existence of definite or absolute right and wrong (as opposed to relative right and wrong), remember that their lives are full of decisions based on right vs. wrong, correct vs. incorrect, moral vs. immoral.
7. Remember that in an age of relativism, the two measuring sticks that can still be used to distinguish truth from error are whether something is consistently *affirmable* and whether it is *livable*.
8. While not required, it is helpful to understand non-Christian beliefs prior to witnessing to those of other faiths. Not only will your confidence increase, you will better know how to ask probing questions that more effectively surface their discrepancies. Start by acquiring and carefully reading one of the recommended resources listed at the back of this book.
9. Given the rapid spread of Islam, take the time to correctly understand the most important beliefs of this religion, whether in reading about it or, better yet, talking to a Muslim. In the same way, seek to accurately understand other non-Christian faiths.

Application Points

1. How we dialogue with others will depend on their worldview. Therefore, make a mental list of the worldview perspectives you hear in your conversations with your non-Christian friends. Considering that they may not always be consistent, which worldview category do most of their beliefs fall into?

2. The next time you run into a snag in your witness to someone who holds to a radically different religious perspective, consider building your case for Christ a few steps further back in the 12-step approach you learned for establishing the case for Christianity.
3. Reflect on what basis you make the various decisions in your life. Then explore the consequences of deliberately making decisions as though it really makes no difference which way you decided. For example, consider whether there would be any consequences for thinking that there is no absolute right or wrong in making the decision to download copyrighted music or videos. To make you more effective in your witness to postmoderns, integrate the insights you gain in trying to apply relativistic thinking to help you better understand how a relativist thinks.
4. Begin to memorize some of the key questions from appendix 5. Next time you have an opportunity, ask one of those questions of your friend who holds to one of those beliefs (atheism, agnosticism, Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam). Remember to reword the question in language you are comfortable with.
5. Begin to memorize the key points of the Apologetic Outline (see chapter 6). In your discussions with others, try to ask questions in a way that will allow your friends to surface the truth for themselves, yet come to the same conclusions that you hold. Learn to string question after question in such a way that you build common beliefs with each question asked and answered. Memorizing the key points will help you to not skip those that may help others discover that Christianity truly is a reasonable faith and that knowing God can be a great spiritual adventure.

Chapter 8 – *The Art of Answering Objections* *While Moving Forward*

Understanding the Nature of Their Barrier

Some obstacles to embracing Christianity might be:

- A sinful and selfish nature (Jeremiah 17:9)
- An indifference toward religious perspectives
- A focus on materialism
- A negative attitude toward Christianity's claim to be the only way to God
- A pluralistic mind-set that encourages a person to keep their options open
- Hypocrisy among Christians

Doing More than Providing an Answer

Answers should do more than simple answer a question.
Answers should help unbelievers take steps toward Christ.

The Goal

"We are destroying speculation and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God." (2 Corinthians 10:5)

Asking Four Questions Behind Each Question

To clarify misunderstandings and BUILD BRIDGES to the Gospel, we need to ask and ANSWER at least four fundamental questions for each major question our nonbelieving friends may ask us:

1. What are the possible questions (or issues) behind each question (or issue) that needs to be addressed?
2. What terms that they use need to be clarified?
3. What truth do we want them to grasp about the question or issue raised?
4. What questions and ILLUSTRATIONS can we use to help them grasp this truth?

Key Questions to Answer

1. It doesn't matter what you believe as long as you are sincere and you don't hurt anyone else.
2. What's so special about Christianity? I thought that all religions basically teach the same thing.
3. How can you claim there is only one way to God? Are you not being arrogant and exclusive?
4. What about those who have never heard the Gospel?
5. It's okay to believe what you want as long as you don't try to convert others to your beliefs.
6. Can you prove to me that God exists?
7. If God is loving, how can there be a hell?
8. Why is there not more than one God?
9. How can there be a loving God when there is so much evil and suffering in the world?
10. How can I choose Christ when my dead ancestors are separated from Him and could be separated from me?

Reflection

1. When we encounter barriers in our witness to others we should ask ourselves, Is their primary barrier first and foremost a barrier to correctly understanding Christianity or is it a barrier to their embracing Christianity? Remember, how you answer this question will dictate what your next step should be in your witness to them.
2. Remember that in today's world, to provide people palatable and plausible answers about our Christian faith, we may need to use an illustration or story first to help them accept the general principle we're trying to communicate. Then and only then can we make the inference to the theological implications of that agreed upon understanding.
3. Have you ever noticed how often people's objections to God and His standard of righteousness seem to be based on their own personal standard? In doing so, are they not placing God on trial based on what they think He should be like? To make spiritual progress with such people, we must help them reexamine some of these assumptions before what we say will strike a chord with them. Only then might we be able to make spiritual progress in our conversations with them.
4. A correct understanding about the God we worship and a correct understanding about who we are in relationship to Him is foundational to correctly answering many of the questions and challenges we may hear about God and the Bible.

Application Points

1. Listen carefully to the objections a person raises against God to detect erroneous, presupposed ideas of who He is. Explore these premises with the objector to help him see these judgments about God for himself. Clearing up wrong ideas on the very nature of God will provide valuable insights for the person struggling to understand God and the Bible.
2. Explore for yourself those passages of Scripture that speak about the transcendent and unapproachable holiness of God (e.g., Isaiah 6:1-7; Habakkuk 1:13; Hebrews 12:28-29). Use this knowledge to see anew the wonderful news of reconciliation, which is through Christ alone.