

Spiritual Conversations (like the ones that Jesus had)...

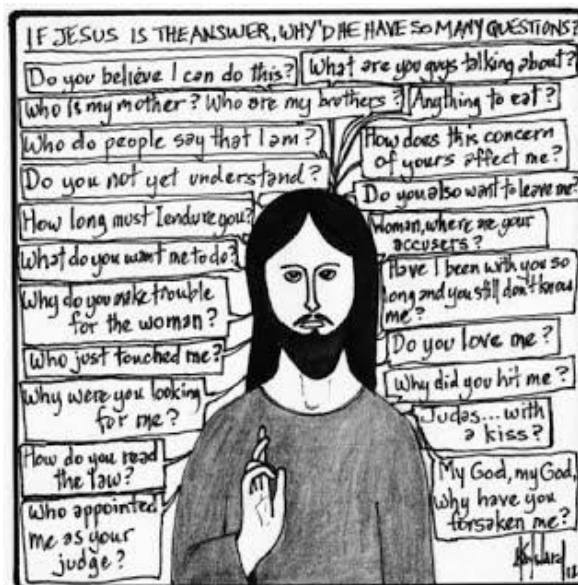
Jesus was an amazing spiritual conversationalist. He communicated his message of “The Kingdom of God” to a broad range of people using a broad range of conversational techniques. He didn’t have a one-size-fits-all message or technique, nor did he want the process to be all one-way communication out from him to his listeners. Instead, he created a space that his listeners could enter into and seriously engage with the message he was sharing.

Check out some of his more memorable spiritual conversations...

- The Nighttime Chat: John 3:1-21
- The Big Question: Luke 18:18-30
- Gone to the Dogs: Matthew 15:21-28
- The Awkward Party: Luke 7:36-50
- It’s a Trap: Matthew 22:15-22
- That Big Question Again: Luke 10:25-37
- A Bit Tricky: Luke 24:13-29

Here is a list of techniques we prepared earlier:

- Observing, listening & discerning
- Asking questions
- Telling parables (disruptive stories)
- Owning what you think or believe
- Grounding ideas and beliefs in their source
- Creating a space for independent thought or for disagreement
- Elevating the conversation & digging deeper



Observing, Listening & Discerning:

- Who is the person you are talking to? What is their story?
- How does their life, their interests and concerns connect with the gospel?
- What is the person’s interest in the topic? Is it personal and pastoral? Is it oppositional and argumentative? Is it genuine curiosity and interest?

Asking Questions:

- There are different types of questions that can be used for different purposes – open, closed, probing, leading, loaded, rhetorical etc...
 - “That’s a great question. What’s the story behind it?” / “Where does that question come from?”
 - “What have you already heard about that?” / “What do you already know about that?” / “What’s your current understanding of that?”
 - “What do you think about that?” / “How do you feel about that?”
 - “What do you like about that?” / “What do you not like about that?”

Parables (or Disruptive Stories & Statements):

- Share an existing Jesus parable that would help people think through this issue...
- Share a modern parable that someone has written
- Share something interesting/provocative you know or have heard on the question/topic

Owning:

- Sharing what you think, feel, believe, understand or aren't sure about...
 - *"At this point in time, I believe..."*
 - *"I've had some different thoughts on that over time. Some of them have been..."*
 - *"I don't have a clear view of this myself at the moment..."*

Grounding:

- Grounding a statement in its source...
 - *"Christians believe a range of things about that topic, although it would be fair to say that for most of the church's history, the main views have been..."*
 - *"In the Bible, there are some passages that talk about that, they are..."*

Creating Space:

- Different people who call themselves Christians hold different beliefs and positions on this issue. This is nothing new. Christians disagreeing on things is an age-old concern. People are encouraged to walk alongside each other as they support each other on their walk towards God
- Sometimes people will have a view that doesn't agree with broad Christian thinking on a topic, so it's fine to say something like, *"That view wouldn't be consistent with a Christian view on..."*

Elevating:

- Moving beyond contested details to a higher/deeper point that's worth highlighting...
 - *"That's a good question, but another, perhaps better, question you could ask about that is..."*
 - *"There are a range of opinions when it comes to a Christian view of that issue. I don't know that there will ever be a consensus on that. What there seems to be clearer is that the core message of the Christian gospel is that everyone is invited into a life with God..."*

