

Wondering your way into Spiritual Conversations

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There are many places in scripture where we as Christians are commanded to share the good news of Christ with others. I don't know about you, but for me this can often feel uncomfortable, intimidating, and uncertain. But before we have an opportunity to share the gospel with someone, we must first *start* a conversation about spiritual things.

A great place to start is by wondering.

Wondering is simply desiring to know more about a person and asking them open ended questions in an attempt to understand who they are and what they care about. *By wondering we can create space for God in our everyday conversations.*

WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY?

- **Read** Ecclesiastes 3:11
 - God has put eternity into the hearts of all people.
 - We can be confident that people are thinking about spiritual things in one way or another
- **Read** 1 Peter 3:15-16
 - What are we commanded to do?
 - How are we to do it?
- **Read** Colossians 4:2-6
 - How are we to interact with people who do not yet know Christ?

- Notice that Paul mentions prayer at the beginning of verse 2 and 3. Prayer is essential in creating space for God in our conversations.

"I WONDER..."

One way to move towards a spiritual conversation is by using the phrase "*I wonder...*". If you are a very direct communicator, like me, this can help soften your questions, and keep people from becoming defensive. It also invites people to share more about something and shows them that you care about getting to know them more.

AN EXAMPLE

Your friend tells you that they are feeling really stressed out right now. You could just saying "Oh, that's too bad", which ends the conversation, or respond by asking them, "Why are you so stressed out?" which could come across as harsh or accusatory and your friend may feel defensive. Instead, why don't you take this opportunity to wonder by saying, "I wonder why you are feeling so stressed out?" This shows that you care about how they are feeling and it invites them to share more. As you continue to wonder you may begin to see where the Holy Spirit is already at work in their life and find yourself having a spiritual conversation with them!

ANOTHER EXAMPLE

A coworker of mine, shared this story on her blog about her experience wondering:

I got a chance to do this with two young girls last night. I told them the story of how Moses received the 10 Commandments from God at the top of Mt Sinai. When I got to the commandment about not stealing, the older of the two said it was ok to steal small things. I asked her, "I wonder if your classmate took an eraser off your desk, would you think that was ok?" She said that it wasn't, but she wasn't ready to give up her opinion about stealing small things.

See how wondering led her to challenge her beliefs in a caring, non-threatening way?

What stands out to you in the examples above?

SOME IMPORTANT THINGS TO REMEMBER

- Good wondering questions are open ended in order to invite more conversation
 - For example, "What is your spiritual background?" Instead of, "Did you grow up going to church?"
- Good wondering questions come from a desire to know more about a person, what they care about, their belief system, etc.
- Wondering is not a way to manipulate the conversation so that you can get a certain point across or launch into a monologue.

LET'S START WONDERING

- Role play a conversation with your friend where you wonder about them. Start with a question like, "What's your favorite thing about being _____ ethnicity?" or "What is your family like?"
- Think of a person that you can genuinely wonder about their life and story this week.
 - After your conversation take a few notes about what went well and what you might have done differently, and share your thoughts with your discipler/coach.
- Pray for God to create space for you to have spiritual conversations this week
- Read the list of "99 wondering questions" from Doug Pollock's book [here](http://goo.gl/7zqH3D) (goo.gl/7zqH3D).
 - Choose one or two questions that sound like you and ask a friend this week.

SOME GOOD WAYS TO START WONDERING

- Last week you told me _____, I'm wondering what you meant by that. Could you tell me more?
- I wonder why you chose that major?
- What it has been like for you being the first one in your family to go to college?
- I wonder what it was like for you growing up in church?
- I wonder why your family feels that way about _____. What do you think?

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