

Jesus was a master conversationalist. Whether you were rich or poor, a leper or blind, a Roman Centurian or a Jewish Pharisee, Jesus talked with you. Insiders follow the way of Jesus, becoming masters at provoking good conversations.

Conversations are one of the great pleasures of life. The dictionary defines conversation as “good talk practiced as an art.” There’s an artful way about asking questions, listening intently, and affirming another. Jesus creatively engaged people through talking, fostering dialogues rather than only monologues. Good conversations are life-giving and life-enriching.

What made Jesus a good conversationalist? He asked a lot of questions. There are 307 questions recorded in the Gospels. In the original Latin, Jesus was the great *interrogator*; literally the One who asks questions. Our Lord didn’t ask questions to gain information (after all, He was omniscient); He asked questions to build relationships, challenge assumptions, and encourage action.

Not only did He ask questions, but Jesus was an interesting person. He understood the politics of Roman rule (Matthew 22:15-22), He could debate the great religious minds of his day (Matthew 19:3-9), and He was aware of current events (Luke 13:1-5). Jesus was not a hermit shut off from the world or a mystic divorced from current events. People enjoyed being with Him because He told good stories, puzzled listeners with riddles, and stretched His friends’ imaginations through word-pictures. Who wouldn’t want to hang out with someone like Jesus!

In a recent survey, non-Christians assessed Christians as “more boring, more isolated, more unfashionable, having fewer interests, less involved in the real world, and less happy.” And then we suggest that people join us! Theologian Derek Kidner writes, “For his neighbors’ sake if for no other reason, the Christian should beware of becoming a person of so few earthly interests that he cannot sustain a conversation, let alone a friendship with anybody outside his religious circle.” Interesting people are catalysts for good conversations, discussions that create ever-expanding circles of influence to advance the gospel.

Do you want to be Christ-like? Ask the Holy Spirit to make you a curious person. Curious people are good conversationalists, graciously inquisitive about others, asking questions that affirm and encourage discoveries. Pray for an interesting life. What hobbies, books, or friends enrich your life that can enrich the life of another?

The church is casting about for the great evangelism secret, the turn-key for outreach. I think the solution is found in the simplicity of a good conversation. When we live life2life with unchurched people, faith conversations will naturally flow from good conversations.

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