

7. How to start a normal conversation

Twenty-minute discussion

HOOK:

- Did anyone manage to have a few conversations this week (on any topic) where they tried to only ask questions, as suggested in the previous session? How did it go?

LOOK:

- Revise the four points.
- What do you think of the suggestion that we could remove the agenda of sharing the Gospel for a while? Is this useful, or is this a compromise? Why?

BOOK: John 4.4-16 – Humour and the Samaritan woman

- Do you think Jesus' question at v10 was serious, or was he playing with (humouring) her?
- Do you think her reply in v 11 was serious, or might she also have been humouring him?
- Do you think it possible that Jesus' comment in v13 and her reply in v15 might also have had a tone of humour/social 'banter' to them?
- The conversation took a serious turn from v 16. What might Jesus have been trying to achieve in the conversation prior to this (noting Jews didn't talk to Samaritans, men didn't so readily talk to woman in their conservative culture, and she was also on the social fringe)?

TOOK:

- Play the question game again.
- Try to have a conversation or two this week where you ask people about their views on something spiritually connected, but make a concerted effort to try to understand their view of these things, and to affirm things you agree with.

Note: If you disagree, we talk in the next session about how to deal with this. For now, your goal is to get a conversation going so that you can see the truth that people ARE open to talking about spiritual things *so long as they feel confident that the other person will listen without judging, and doesn't have an agenda to push their own view*. So, hold back on your comments. Focus on the people-skill involved in holding an open and unthreatening conversation about spiritual things. If you succeed, they will be willing to have another similar conversation.

- If helpful, share ideas of possible questions you could ask to start such a conversation. Maybe discussing a recent world news event might help.

Pray:

- ...for a deep love for others that will enable you to take a selfless interest in them, to ask questions wisely, and to listen without making them feel judged or critiqued.
- ...for God to lead you to people at suitable times and places, who will be willing to discuss their spiritual views in a 'safe' conversation.