

Session 4

How to Have a Discipling Conversation (Part 1)

Welcome and Prayer

Ask for a volunteer to open the session with prayer.

Sharing

Invite the group to share any insights, questions or revelations from the daily reflections from the prior week.

Introduction of Session Focus

According to Wikipedia, small talk is “an informal type of discourse that does not cover any functional topics of conversation or any transactions that need to be addressed. In essence, it is polite conversation about unimportant things.”

If we are honest with ourselves we might have to admit that many of our conversations fall into this category. They are informal, lacking in direction and of relative unimportance. Discipling conversations, on the other hand, are conversations with purpose, focus and direction. They are conversations that help someone grow closer to God and deeper in their understanding of what it means to be baptized in Christ Jesus.

Sharing Christ is like what Tim Keller says, “It’s like a quarterback trying to find an opening to where he or she will throw the pass and reach the receiver.” We are always looking for an opening to share our faith.

Our video today will highlight one way to turn our small talk into the big talk of discipleship.

Time in the Word

Scripture reading - John 4:4-15

And [Jesus] had to pass through Samaria. So he came to a town of Samaria called Sychar, near the field that Jacob had given to his son Joseph. Jacob’s well was there; so Jesus, wearied as he was from his journey, was sitting beside the well. It was about the sixth hour.

A woman from Samaria came to draw water. Jesus said to her, “Give me a drink.” (For his disciples had gone away into the city to buy food.) The Samaritan woman said to him, “How is it that you, a Jew, ask for a drink from me, a woman of Samaria?” (For Jews have no dealings with Samaritans.) Jesus answered her, “If you knew the gift of God, and who it is that is saying to you, ‘Give me a drink,’ you would have asked him, and he would have given you living water.” The woman said to him, “Sir, you have nothing to draw water with, and the well is deep. Where do you get that living water? Are you greater than our father Jacob? He gave us the well and drank from it himself, as did his sons and his livestock.” Jesus said to her, “Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks of the water that I will give him will never be thirsty again. The water that I will give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life.” The woman said to him, “Sir, give me this water, so that I will not be thirsty or have to come here to draw water.”

Jesus was tired and thirsty after a long day of travel when he encountered the Samaritan woman. He could have easily brushed off her question about why, he as a Jewish rabbi, was asking a Samaritan for a drink. Jesus, however, used this as an opportunity to draw her into a much deeper conversation about faith.

Watch the video: "How to Have a Discipling Conversation, Part 1) with Pastor David Keener.

<https://vimeo.com/showcase/9248204/video/673626231/embed>

Large Group Discussion

1. What did you find most helpful or challenging in the video?
2. Can you think any conversations you have had that challenged someone to explore their faith more deeply?
3. Can you think of any opportunities that you may have missed because it was easier to say nothing?
4. Why do you think some people are hesitant to engage others in faith conversations?
5. How might the discipling conversation model help us to overcome our hesitancy?

Breakout sessions

Gather in groups of two or three

Scripture reading: Luke:24:13-32

That very day two of them were going to a village named Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem, and they were talking with each other about all these things that had happened. While they were talking and discussing together, Jesus himself drew near and went with them. But their eyes were kept from recognizing him. And he said to them, "What is this conversation that you are holding with each other as you walk?" And they stood still, looking sad. Then one of them, named Cleopas, answered him, "Are you the only visitor to Jerusalem who does not know the things that have happened there in these days?" And he said to them, "What things?" And they said to him, "Concerning Jesus of Nazareth, a man who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, and how our chief priests and rulers delivered him up to be condemned to

death, and crucified him. But we had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel. Yes, and besides all this, it is now the third day since these things happened. Moreover, some women of our company amazed us. They were at the tomb early in the morning, and when they did not find his body, they came back saying that they had even seen a vision of angels, who said that he was alive. Some of those who were with us went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said, but him they did not see.”

And he said to them, “O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory?” And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself.

So they drew near to the village to which they were going. He acted as if he were going farther, but they urged him strongly, saying, “Stay with us, for it is toward evening and the day is now far spent.” So he went in to stay with them. When he was at table with them, he took the bread and blessed and broke it and gave it to them. And their eyes were opened, and they recognized him. And he vanished from their sight. They said to each other, “Did not our hearts burn within us while he talked to us on the road, while he opened to us the Scriptures?”

Discussion Questions

6. What words or phrases stand out for you in this Scripture passage?

7. The irony in the road to Emmaus story is that the disciples are discussing Jesus while he is walking right beside them. It was only in retrospect that they recognized his presence. Have you ever had a time when on reflection you realized that Christ was walking with you?

8. What part did Word and Sacrament play in the disciples revelation that Christ was present with them?

The following pattern of questions will help move the conversation between the discipleship guide and the disciple as you talk about what is going on in the disciple’s life:

- Where are you now? (Current Reality)
- Where do you want to be? (Vision)
- Does your vision reflect your beliefs, values & priorities? (Alignment)
- How do you plan to accomplish your vision? (Action Plan)
- What resources will you need?
- How can I hold you accountable?

Practice Session

Over the next few weeks we will be practicing how to have discipling conversations. Assign one member of your group to play the part of a discipleship guide and another to be the one guided. Using the *Discipleship Conversation Model* work through the scenario below. This will be a new experience for many and may be uncomfortable at first. Keeping this in mind, remember that as Christ followers we are to speak the truth in love. Our evaluations of the practice sessions should be helpful and encouraging not critical or unkind.

If time allows after the discussion switch roles and repeat the scenario.

Remember

- a. A discipleship guide is not a counselor or mentor. The goal in the conversation is to help the other person discover their own solutions.
- b. Part of the discipleship guide's task is to help others see where God is already walking and working in their lives.
- c. In real life situations there will be no time constraints on the flow of your faith conversations. For these practice sessions do your best to move through the various stages of a discipling conversation.

Scenario

You are having a conversation with a friend over coffee. They remark that they have been offered a new job for more money. They are torn with accepting it because, even though they could use the extra money, they really love their current position and the people they work with.

After about 10 minutes stop and discuss:

1. What went well in the conversation?
2. What might have been done differently?
3. How challenging was it to guide rather than problem solve?
4. How well did the conversation move through the various stages of a discipling conversation?

Large group wrap-up

Have participants share any closing thoughts, questions, insights or observations that arose from the break out groups.

Remind participants to do the daily devotions and encourage them to journal their insights and questions.

Next week: "How to have a Discipling Conversation — Part 2"

Close in prayer.

Helpful Resources

Coaching 101 by Logan & Carlton, ChurchSmart Resources, 2003

Hearing God: Developing a Conversational Relationship with God by Dallas Willard

The Spirit of the Disciplines: Understanding How God Changes Lives by Dallas Willard

Devotions: Week Four

Weekday 1

Scripture reading — Ephesians 4:15-16

“Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love.”

Focus Questions

Record your thoughts from prayer and reflection.

1. Read through the Scripture a second time and highlight the word or phrase that stands out for you.
2. What is going on in your life that connects with that word or phrase?
3. Do you find it challenging or easy to “speak the truth in love?”
4. In what ways are you “growing up” into Christ who is the head?
5. Where is the Holy Spirit inviting you to respond this week?

Daily Journal

Record your thoughts from prayer and reflection.

What has caused you to think deeper?

Weekday 2

Scripture reading — Colossians 4:5-6

“Walk in wisdom toward outsiders, making the best use of the time. Let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how you ought to answer each person.”

Focus Questions

Record your thoughts from prayer and reflection.

1. Read through the Scripture a second time and highlight the word or phrase that stands out for you.

2. What is going on in your life that connects with that word or phrase?

3. The saying, “putting salt on the wound” refers to making an unpleasant situation even worse. On the other hand, one of the reasons that salt makes food taste better is because it blocks the “bitterness” receptors in your taste buds. Take some time to think about conversations you have had recently. Did they help to relieve bitterness or rub salt in a wound?

4. Where is the Holy Spirit inviting you to respond this week?

Daily Journal

Record your thoughts from prayer and reflection.

What have you thought about today in this focus area that you are longing for?

Weekday 3

Scripture reading — Matthew 18:19-20

“Again I say to you, if two of you agree on earth about anything they ask, it will be done for them by my Father in heaven. For where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I among them.”

Focus Questions

Record your thoughts from prayer and reflection.

1. Read through the Scripture a second time and highlight the word or phrase that stands out for you.
2. What is going on in your life that connects with that word or phrase?
3. Jesus teaches his disciples that he is present anytime people gather in his name. It is his presence that makes things holy. His presence in the bread and wine of Holy Communion feeds our souls. His presence in the waters of Baptism makes us heirs to the kingdom of God. What difference should his presence make in our daily interactions with others?
4. There is a saying, “Do not talk to the person about God until you have talked to God about the person.” What part does prayer play in your daily conversations with others?
5. Where is the Holy Spirit inviting you to respond this week?

Daily Journal

Record your thoughts from prayer and reflection.

What small specific step and active response can you take in the direction God's Word is leading you?

Weekday 4

Scripture reading — Psalm 141:1-3

O LORD, I call upon you; hasten to me! Give ear to my voice when I call to you!
Let my prayer be counted as incense before you, and the lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice!
Set a guard, O LORD, over my mouth; keep watch over the door of my lips!

Focus Questions

Record your thoughts from prayer and reflection.

1. Read through the Scripture a second time and highlight the word or phrase that stands out for you.
2. What is going on in your life that connects with that word or phrase?
3. The psalmist prays that God would set a guard over his mouth. We cannot listen if we are constantly thinking about what we are going to say next. Take some time to pray about how you might be a better listener? What "guards" might you put into place to help you be more attentive to the voice of God and others? How can you keep your words sweet and gentle?

4. Where is the Holy Spirit inviting you to respond this week?

Daily Journal

Record your thoughts from prayer and reflection.

How does this passage focus my attention first on Jesus, second on my identity “in Christ,” and third on my participation in the Body of Christ?

How is this passage moving me beyond myself to take a specific small step in the direction of serving my family, church, or neighbor?

Weekday 5

Scripture reading — Isaiah 30:20-21

“And though the Lord give you the bread of adversity and the water of affliction, yet your Teacher will not hide himself anymore, but your eyes shall see your Teacher. And your ears shall hear a word behind you, saying, ‘This is the way, walk in it,’ when you turn to the right or when you turn to the left.”

Focus Questions

Record your thoughts from prayer and reflection.

1. Read through the Scripture a second time and highlight the word or phrase that stands out for you.

2. What is going on in your life that connects with that word or phrase?

3. In the Scripture above, Israel was facing a time of trial and tribulation, yet Isaiah assures them that they have not been abandoned by God. He is there for those who take the time to look and his voice can be heard by those who intently listen. What challenges are you facing in your life right now? Take some time in quiet meditation to look for God's hand in your life and to listen for his voice.

4. Where is the Holy Spirit inviting you to respond this week?

Daily Journal

Record your thoughts from prayer and reflection.

Reflecting on the Scriptures this week, what theme do you see developing?

Review any action steps you have felt led to take. If you have not yet started, when will you begin?

Begin to write a one or two sentence statement for this week's focus area. Try to have it reflect what the verses this week have taught you about who Christ Jesus is, and his invitation to follow him in this area of life.

Saturday (before worship...preparing)

Saturdays are a day of preparation as we contemplate the coming Sabbath. Look back over the week, consider such questions as:

1. What sins will I lay before the Lord in my confession?
2. What prayers will I lift up?
3. What questions will I be seeking the answers to?
4. What burdens do I need to lay down in order to be fully open to the movement of the Holy Spirit?
5. Who might I invite to journey with me?

Sunday (after worship...pondering)

Sundays are devoted to worship and reflection. We gather together as the Body of Christ to lift our praises to God and receive what only he can give us. Later, reflect on such questions as:

1. What point of the sermon or Sunday School lesson most caught my attention? What exactly touched my heart?
2. Which song, hymn or portion of liturgy most became a prayer or conversation with God?

3. How will making my confession and hearing the absolution affect how I live this week?

4. What strength or comfort did I receive as I participated in worship today?

5. What was the gospel message I heard today and who did I share it with?

6. Who did I speak with that I can remember in prayer this week?