



# Having Spiritual Conversations

## Why is Environment Important?

Ravi Zacharias says, "We must learn to find the back door to people's hearts because the front door is heavily guarded." Many people we hope to reach for Jesus react defensively. They anticipate and are amply prepared for any direct attack on the holy places and sacred shrines of their hearts. Ecclesiastes 3:11 reminds us that God has given us *all* an inner drive to know and be known by Him. We just receive the joy and responsibility of helping to draw that out in others.

We do this by creating a *safe space* for an exchange of *wondering questions* that lead to spiritual conversations.

## How Do I Create an Environment for Conversation?

The best spiritual conversations happen in a place where the other person feels comfortable. Be attentive to location, who is around you, lighting, etc.

Be genuine and truly interested in what others think and feel! People typically reciprocate curiosity and interest in what you think, and you get to set the tone of interest, first.

Remember, not-yet Christians and seekers aren't the enemy! Don't treat them like one. Remember and pray about the spiritual reality of the enemy of our souls who does not want your new friend to know God. He's the actual enemy.

Be persistent in relationship. Over time, even skeptical and cynical people take note of something they know is not of this world.

Don't feel like you have to force God into the picture. He's always with you, and all good wondering questions eventually lead to God!

Lastly, remember that what we cherish most, we notice most. We get to live in a way that can draw others closer to God and make this a priority!

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Galatians 5:25 encourages us to keep in step with the Spirit. Don't drop an entire theology lesson on someone who asked one spiritual question! In fact, in most of our conversations, *questions* are more important than *answers*. Sometimes people aren't ready for answers, and you get to walk with them through the question!



Prepare spiritual “appetizers” beforehand. Think about some short stories that could pique spiritual curiosity, keep dialogue flowing, and demonstrate the relevance of Christ in our lives. Pro-tip: before you offer a story, ask permission! Keep it short and relevant to the topic at hand.

Know that a timely Scripture can connect more to a heart than a lifetime of sermons. Memorize a few Scriptures for this purpose!

Don’t attempt to *win* a conversation. This may mean losing opportunities for future interactions with that person. 2 Timothy 2:23-25 also warns us not to have anything to do with foolish and stupid arguments. Stay focused on the point!

Don’t be parental during conversations. Approach questions as a peer who desires to learn about the other person. Share about yourself, too!

Learn to translate spiritual truths into everyday vernacular. Don’t use Christianese! This could make spiritual matters inaccessible to the other person.

Lastly, as you bring up the gospel, use discernment to figure out if your friend is ready to hear this spiritual truth. We hear truth when our heads and hearts are bowed toward God in the humility that comes from understanding our brokenness.

### **What About Rebuilding a Fractured Relationship?**

If a bridge is broken, it’s unrealistic to think that it’s going to be rebuilt from the other side. Make the effort in the relationship!

Take the position of humility and abandon your “weapons.” Interact with this friend with joy and take courage! Failure is rarely final or fatal, but simply an opportunity to begin again with more wisdom and discernment about approaching that particular relationship.

### **What Are Good Wondering Questions?**

- What is the greatest piece of wisdom someone has ever passed on to you?
- What is the most important lesson you’ve learned in life so far?
- Have you ever had anyone approach you and try to talk to you about God? What feelings did you have afterward?
- Why do you think there are so many religions/ Do you think it’s possible for them all to equally be right?
- Have you ever been able to get a handle on what you think your purpose is in life?
- Do you believe there is a solution to social problems such as murder, famine, rape, racism, or divorce?
- Have you ever had an experience where you felt the presence of evil? The presence of God?
- What causes you to struggle the most with the idea of God’s existence?
- Why do you think so many couples end up falling out of love? Is this true love?
- What would you want God to do to validate his existence and bring you to belief?
- As people get to know you, in what area do you feel most misunderstood?
- If you could ask God three questions, what would you ask?

