

## **YOU CAN SHARE THE GOOD NEWS OF JESUS! (2)**

### **How to S.H.A.R.E. Your Faith**

**By Bob Young**

Spiritual questions lead to spiritual conversations. To effectively share faith, one must keep in mind the importance of asking questions. The one asking the questions leads the conversation.

Asking questions makes it more likely that we will develop listening skills. This may seem counterintuitive, but sharing faith begins with listening. In fact, sharing faith in personal settings requires listening. The importance of asking questions implies the importance of listening. Where is the hurt, need, curiosity, interest, point of entry for the gospel? How can the seed of God's Word be sown?

About forty years ago, as I was seeking to hone my ministry skills to facilitate and enable the growth of the local church, I was introduced to the concept of "spiritual conversations." Sharing the gospel with other people begins with spiritual conversations that are capable of awakening interest.

I began to practice – trying to turn conversations with other people into spiritual conversations. I studied communication. I thought about the characteristics and motivations of spiritual conversations. I wrote lists of spiritual conversation starters. I learned how to include spiritual conversational elements in my conversations with almost everyone. Having superficial conversations is easy; having personal, spiritual conversations requires more thought.

What if your goal was not to make conversation but was to make a difference? What if there were an easy way to stay on track? Spiritual conversations can be a regular part of your daily life. There are things you can do to make sharing the Good News of Jesus easier.

S.H.A.R.E. Sharing your faith is as simple as 1-2-3, plus 4-5!

#### **SEEK AND SEE**

Jesus came seeking the lost. We go forth on the lookout, we are scouts, we are constantly surveying the territory. We are seeking people for Jesus. Seeking the lost means checking the interest of other people, asking questions, listening, opening doors. As we seek, we must develop eyes that see. As I seek, I must listen to the stories of others so I can know how to develop their interest in spiritual things.

#### **HEAR**

Being a good listener does not come naturally for many of us. In addition, we have been taught that evangelism involves talking, not listening. We must earn the right to talk. We must hear other people. We must make sure they know that we have heard them, that we are listening. When we listen, we show that we value other people. We perk up interest. We are able to identify with others in the experiences of life. And, since we want to share with others the benefits of being a Christian, we are learning which benefits of following Jesus are most attractive to them.

#### **ANALYZE**

We go out each day into the world with our spiritual antenna up! We want to hear others, we listen attentively. Now what? When we really listen, we are able to analyze what we hear, evaluate needs, and connect with those needs. Some needs are felt needs, others are unknown. Some needs are physical, others are spiritual.

An important part of analyzing conversations and knowing what is going on is developing spiritual perception, or evangelistic perception. Perceive the spiritual condition of the heart of another person. A biblical passage that helps us understand this process is Jesus' parable of the sower and the four different kinds of soils.

#### **RECOGNIZE**

Recognize different kinds of hearts. Recognize and acknowledge objections. Practice reflective listening. Reinforce the connection between the gospel and the needs you heard. You can advance the conversation, giving yourself more opportunities to hear and understand, with more questions.

## **ENCOURAGE or EVANGELIZE**

**ENCOURAGE.** Often, the appropriate last step of a conversation is to encourage future contact and conversations. Encouraging may involve asking for more details, a clarification, or an expansion of something that has been said. The goal is to establish connections and a relationship.

**EVANGELIZE.** In some cases, the appropriate next step is to establish a Bible study. Sharing the gospel almost inevitably involves studying the Bible. The authority or power behind the gospel is Jesus Christ, not our explanation of the gospel. Seek, hear, analyze, recognize, and you will be equipped to make good decisions.

In this day of social media and mobile devices, simply having an in-person conversation is refreshing. Many hunger and thirst for the personal touch. May we never forget how to approach another person and having a meaningful conversation. I pray that these five ideas can help you engage those you meet in the name of Jesus.