



Active Listening & Asking Good Questions

Our role, as His ambassadors, is to find out where God is already at work in someone's life. This involves discovering where their life story begins and, with the Holy Spirit's guidance, integrate the message of God's love and wonderful plan. Most of us know how to meet others and build friendships. We may know how to explain the Gospel message. However, it is art to actively listen and transition to this message of hope (in a natural way.)

As you ask questions – listen -- think -- “What is God doing in their life to draw them to Him?” Fight the urge to move to quickly! Make sure the Holy Spirit is leading you. Actively listen and ask further questions that allow them to open up their lives more. Then, as the Holy Spirit leads and gives insight where He seems to be working in their lives, move into sharing a part of your story that would connect in sharing His Story; it is source of hope for them.

It is time to practice some of the questions found in CoJourners Explorer and the art of asking and listening. There are two options: Windows of the Soul or the Power Tools. Read through both and select one that would most help you to learn how to actively listen and ask good questions.

1. Windows of the Soul

Is there a window in the room? Stand on the other side of the room and describe what you can see through it. Now move closer to the window. What do you see?

There is a principle at work – the closer you get the more you see. The same principle works within everyday conversations. Casual comments can often be windows to a person's soul. These are conversational clues. On the surface they appear to be casual comments, but if you investigate with questions, you discover there is much more to be seen.

Discuss

- Name examples of common conversational clues you might hear.
- Can you think of a recent example?
- What questions might you ask to explore a conversational clue?
- Read: Colossians 4:5. How could exploratory questions help you obey this instruction?

Action Plan

Pray that God will make you alert to comments that could be windows to the soul. Be prepared to ask probing questions to see what is behind the comment. Keep a journal or list of the conversations that result to share in your next meeting.

Summary

Investigate revealing comments to get below the surface.

2. Power Tools

Listening can reveal many insights into a person's spiritual journey. But through questions, you can discover so much more. Questions can guide conversations to deeper levels and into desired topics. Most conversations remain at a surface level. Questions have the power to take a conversation below the surface.

Discuss

- What questions do you like to use to discover where a person is spiritually?
- How do you think most people would respond to each of the following questions?
- What was your religious background as a child?
- What words would you use to describe your life spiritually?
- Do you have a spiritual belief of any kind?
- What don't you believe?
- Have you ever experienced God? If so, how?
- Has anything dramatic happened that has convinced you that God is real?
- Is there a heaven and a hell?
- If you were to die tonight, how sure are you that you would have eternal life? Why?
- What barriers keep you from trusting God?
- Brainstorm more good questions.

Action Plan

Choose a question to ask a number of acquaintances this week. Conversationally explore their answers with other questions. Journal your conversations to share and discuss at your next small group meeting.

Summary

Questions are the power tool to explore others' lives.