How to Have Gospel Conversations?

Introduction: How Busy Are We?

Jesus is not too busy to have many interactions with people.

Summary:

* Jesus initiates some interactions.
  + A Samaritan Woman (John 4:7-32)
  + A disabled beggar (John 5:1-15)
* Others initiate interactions with Jesus.
  + A rich young ruler (Matt. 19:16-30)
  + A demoniac (Mark 5:1-20)
  + Jairus, a synagogue ruler (Mark 5:21-43)
  + A hemorrhaging woman (Mark 5:24-34)
* Sometimes, third parties facilitate interactions with Jesus.
  + Tax collectors and other “sinners” invited to a party by Matthew   
    (Matt. 9:9-13)
  + Herod introduced by Pilate (Luke 23:6-16)
  + Nathaniel invited Philip (John 1:45-51)
  + An adulterous woman brought by the scribes (John 8:1-11)
* Jesus interacted in the workplace.
  + with James and John (Matt. 4:21-22)
  + with a Samaritan woman (John 4:7-42)
  + with a lame man (John 5:1-15)
* Jesus interacted in homes.
  + At Peter’s house with his mother-in-law (Mark 1:29-31)
  + With a Syro-Phoenician woman (Mark 7:24-30)
  + At Zacchaeus’ house (Luke 19:1-10)
* Jesus often asked questions.
  + An adulterous woman (John 8:1-11)
  + The scribes (Luke 5:17-26)
  + His mother and brothers (Matt. 12:46-50)
  + The Pharisees (Luke 6:6-11)
* Jesus did not force a closure or a decision.

Observations:

* Jesus takes initiative.
* Jesus responds to the initiatives of others.
* Jesus leaves room in his schedule for interruptions by friends and others enlisting his help.
* Jesus usually meets people on their own turf.
* Jesus establishes common ground with others.

How can we facilitate Gospel Conversations?

1. Value people as God does. Matt. 9:36 “like sheep having no shepherd.”   
   How do you cultivate compassion for others?
2. Be friendly. Prov. 18:24 “A man who has **friends** must himself **be friendly**,” 1 Cor. 9:22 “to the weak I became as weak, that I might **win** the weak. I have become all things to all men, that I might by all means **save** some.”  
   How might you show yourself as friendly to those around you?
3. Show hospitality and serve others. (Rom. 12:13 hospitality; cp. Heb. 13:2 entertain strangers) Matt. 5:16 “Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.”  
   How can we serve and entertain strangers in the United States?
4. Observe and listen well. Acts 17:23 “I even found an altar with this inscription: TO THE UNKNOWN GOD.”  
   How might we focus on what someone is saying to observe and listen?
5. Note something you have in common. (Example: Samaritan Women; )  
   What are some areas of common ground we may have with the unsaved?
6. Seek to discuss (ask questions) and not just lecture (monologue).

How can we promote a discussion over talking over someone?

1. Ask open-ended questions about the other person.   
   Philippians 2:4 “Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others.”
   * What are your plans for the weekend?
   * Have you always lived here in (city name), and what do you like about it?
   * What are your goals for the future?
   * What are you passionate about?
   * What are you working on?
   * What are you excited about?
   * What made you want to become a \_\_\_\_\_?
   * Why do you enjoy \_\_\_\_\_?
   * What do you think is your reason for living?
   * What do you think is most important?
   * What are your plans for the weekend?
   * What do you want to accomplish before you die one day?
   * If you had one last breath left, what would you say with that breath?
   * What do you think is waiting on the other side of death?
   * If you had to live your life again, what would you change? What would you keep the same?

What questions can we ask for the “interest of others”?

1. Look for “open doors” to plant or water the gospel.
   * Mention God, prayer, and the Bible in conversation.
   * Quote or paraphrase the Bible.
   * Use questions about spiritual matters.
   * Share a story of how God has worked in your life and tie it to a verse that relates (salvation, answered prayer, lesson, trial, blessings)

In what ways can we guard against missing open doors?

1. Testimony: How have you started Gospel conversations?