




Spiritual Conversations


How do we gain a hearing for the gospel in today's culture?

How is the church in the United States doing with a Gospel witness?



Cultural Context

1. Declining denominationalism
2. Cultural and political polarization
3. Loss of meaning in daily life
4. Rusty social skills
5. Social media exposure



The state of our witness

- 1. We are having fewer spiritual conversations
- 2. We are uncomfortable with spiritual conversations
- 3. Our spiritual conversations mention Jesus and the Bible less



The state of our witness

- 4. Our approach to spiritual conversations mirrors our surrounding culture
- 5. We know spiritual conversations need to be initiated
- 6. Our conversations increasingly have a digital element



How would we characterize our witness efforts?

- | | |
|---------------|--------------------|
| Acts 2:42-47 | Acts 4:1-4 |
| Acts 5:12-16 | Acts 5:42 – 6:1, 7 |
| Acts 9:19b-31 | Acts 16:1-5 |



How would we characterize our witness efforts?

Eager conversationalist

Reluctant witness



Describe a time when you held your tongue about your faith for fear of social repercussions.

What was your primary fear at those times?

Describe a time when you personally did not bring up your faith for fear of offending someone.



**Eager Conversationalists
or
Reluctant Witness**

Luke 22:54-62

Luke 9:26

Romans 1:16

2 Timothy 4:2



Five Common Myths about Spiritual Conversations

1. Spiritual conversations take place in special places, during special moments, by special people
2. Spiritual conversations are serious and sober events
3. In spiritual conversations I need to be able to give the right answers



Five Common Myths about Spiritual Conversations

4. Most spiritual conversations involve conflict and that ruins everything
5. Spiritual conversations are burdensome duties that are, in the end, painful and regrettable



Spiritual Conversations

What makes for an eager conversationalist?

- Ephesians 6:13-18

Most of the reasons people don't have more spiritual conversations relate to posture rather than content.

- 1 Peter 3:15-17



Habits of eager conversationalists

- 1. Eager conversationalists look for and expect spiritual conversations in everyday life
- 2. Eager conversationalists pursue and initiate spiritual conversations



Habits of eager conversationalists

- 3. Eager conversationalists are open to sharing their faith in a wide variety of ways
- 4. Eager conversationalists gently push through the awkward moments



How would we characterize our witness efforts?

Eager conversationalist

Reluctant witness



What is the most pleasant, interesting, or delightful spiritual conversation you've ever had?

What questions about the Christian faith do you feel least prepared to answer?

How prepared do you feel to talk about your faith and Christian lifestyle?



The Spiritual Conversation Curve

1. Focus on the person: unreceptive, receptive, seeking
2. What we hope happens: gain a hearing, give good news, guide toward faith
3. Conversation types: chat, relate, share, connect, explore, clarify



Colossians 4:5-6