

Truth or Dare

Part 5 – Scratching where people itch

1. Read John 3:1-8, what do you think is on Nicodemus's mind?
2. Why do people avoid talking about the things that really matter to them?
3. What does Jesus talk about with Nicodemus and how might it help him?

What follows is the outline of a process for discovering spiritually helpful subjects to share with friends or acquaintances. Discuss ways in which you already do these kinds of things or which parts of the process might be helpful for you to grow in.

1. Keep in step with the Spirit

Live with an openness to God's Spirit who understands people's hearts and what they need and can in turn help us to understand people's hearts. (Matthew 3:16, Mark 2:8, Luke 5:22, Matthew 12:25, 1 Corinthians 12:8, Galatians 5:28, Acts 16:16-34)

2. Listen Deeply

- Deep listening resists using listening as a springboard to say stuff.
- Deep listening fully focuses in the moment on the other person without pushing our own agenda, voicing our opinion, or offering advice.
- Deep listening is more than just hearing, it is the desire to understand another person's heart.
- This is what God does, deep listening (Psalm 18:6, James 1:19)

Hints for deep listening

- Resist the urge to jump in when there's a pause – deep listening welcomes gaps and silence
- Extend open-ended invitations and cues to the speaker to share more if they wish – e.g.: "Tell me more...", "I hear you...", "I'm listening..."
- Constantly wonder; "What does this mean for this person"?
- Test out your perceptions by asking clarifying questions such as; "does this mean you feel X about Y?"
- If you find your mind wandering, use the speaker's voice to bring you back to the present moment.

3. Ask good questions

The physicist Werner Heisenberg said that; *what we observe is not nature itself, but nature exposed to our method of questioning.* The right question is also a powerful key to understand a person's heart.

Hints for good questions

- Avoid Yes or No questions, so no; "would," "should," "is," "are," and "do" questions. Rather ask "who," "what," "where," "when," "how," or "why", these questions open doors in people.
- Go deeper – ask good follow up questions such as; "What makes you say that?" or "Why do you think that?"
- Respect the power of silence to draw people out.
- Don't interrupt – stops the train of thought.

- Listen deeply and identify the big worry.
- Ask clarifying questions.

4. Address the big worry

- Our friend's biggest worries will be their biggest itches. These will be the things they need to talk about and these will be the things that God wants to help them with (Matthew 6:25-34).
- The truth can be painful but the truth will also set us free (John 3:23, 8:32), so the most valuable person in our life is the one who helps us name our biggest worries and gives us the courage to face them by talking about them.

5. Open the word

The word of God with the Help of God's Spirit will do the heavy lifting because it has power to speak into people's lives, all we need to do is help people open their itch, their area of worry, to God's word (Hebrews 4:12).

6. Introduce Jesus

The heart and soul of the gospel is that the answer to peoples big worry's and life questions are not a what but a who. Our task is to introduce people to Jesus and challenge them to give their lives to the son of God (John 14:6).

7. Trust and pray

- Finally, in witnessing be content with obedience and leave success to God. *Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight.* (Proverbs 3:5-6)
- Being anxious about the results of our witnessing simply adds an extra tension to the mix that you can do without and your friends can do without. We are simply part of a wonderful story that is being written in somebodies life, but we share that story with God's Holy Spirit and a cast of hundreds and it's good to learn to be content with that.