



IN-GAME INTERVIEWS

ENGAGING OTHERS [AM I WILLING TO STEP INTO YOUR WORLD?]

THE HURDLE

I want to move into my teammate's lives but it seems our worlds are so different since I committed my life to Christ. I'm not sure how to stay connected without compromising my own faith. When we're together and issues come up, I'm afraid I'll come across too harsh and judgmental or that I won't know what to say at all. How can I stand up for Christ and Christian values without being a jerk? How do I appropriately get around to talking about spiritual things with my teammates and others without being seen as weird? And if I don't say what I really think, am I just endorsing what they're doing? What if I get pulled into my old lifestyle? I know I'm on God's team now, but I'm not always sure how to relate to my "old" team...

Do you find yourself being one who is too pushy (aggressive, debating, judging) with what you believe about Christ and Christian values or rarely sharing what you believe at all (avoiding, paralyzed, stuck)? Why do you lean in this direction? Would your friends or family agree with your answer?

What challenges do you experience trying to relate as a Christian when interacting with someone who:

- Parties?
- Has a terminal disease?
- Is a family member?
- Is living a sexually immoral life?
- Is a Hindu or Muslim?
- Is an injured teammate out for the season?

How comfortable or uncomfortable are you initiating these types of conversations? Why?

“
People don't care how much you know until they know how much you care.
”

Howard Hendricks
Professor/Author

I HEAR YA

The Bible shows us people struggling with their engagement of others who embrace different views and values...

James/John's Judgment: When his disciples James and John saw this (the Samaritan's rejection of Jesus), they said, "Lord, do you want us to command fire to come down from heaven and consume them?" But Jesus turned and rebuked them. (Luke 9:54,55)

Peter's Passivity: Now Simon Peter was standing and warming himself. So they said to him, "You also are not one of his disciples, are you?" He denied it and said, "I am not." (John 18:25-27)

Paul's Exhortation: "And the Lord's servant must not be quarrelsome but kind to everyone, able to teach, patiently enduring evil, correcting his opponents with gentleness." (II Timothy 2:24,25)

Peter's Growth: "... but set apart Christ as Lord in your hearts, always being ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and respect..." (I Peter 3:15)

LISTEN UP

Relating to others with love and respect without compromise happens as a work of the Spirit in us. As we begin to see people as God does, we'll grow in our ability to meaningfully engage them. Paul describes building blocks that the Spirit uses in his letter to the Colossians.

Read Colossians 4:2-6.

1. The apostle Paul encourages believers toward three foundational but ongoing actions among others who have a different worldview: 1) devoted prayer v2, 2) wise conduct v5, and 3) gracious speech v6. How would you define each of these phrases?
2. Consider: "We should always talk to God about men before talking to men about God." Why is prayer so critical before we hang out with others? What might we pray about? What is Paul's specific prayer request in v3,4?
3. What does Paul mean by wisdom in v5 and what role does it play in how we carry ourselves with others? Explain this quote: "There is a difference between being right and being righteous." How might this idea flavor both our immediate interactions with people but also the way we conduct our lives in general?
4. Paul exhorts us to season our communication with "saltiness." Salt can create thirst, add flavor, and slow down decay. Give an example of how "salty speech" does each of these in real-life situations.
5. After considering each of the three, how are devoted prayer, wise conduct, and gracious speech interrelated with one another?

FOR THE RECORD

God gives us opportunities everyday to be His hands and feet in the world. Before others will see Christ in us, we have to love people, and the best way to show our love for people is to take a genuine interest in them. By His Spirit, God puts a supernatural love for people inside us, one that manifests itself through our curiosity about others, a willingness to listen before speaking, working to understand how God's truth intersects the everyday

happenings of life and being willing to speak about it. Our job isn't to condemn, nor is it to passively participate. Rather, as we improve our communication skills and make ourselves available for the Spirit to engage through us, God provides opportunities to move meaningfully into uncomfortable situations with people, providing wisdom about when to inquire, when to proclaim, and when to be silent.



YOUR MOVE

As Christians, we need to love people enough to respect their current spiritual status while being open to show them what God might have for them. Good communication, comprised of both timely words and silences, forms the bridge between these separate positions. Remember that people are not projects—they are fellow travelers on a journey we all share in common! Becoming a Christian should make us more human, not less!

1. How much you care for people is often reflected in how you work at communication with others. Rate yourself on a scale of 1-5 (1 being “poor,” 5 being “excellent”) on these “good communicator” necessities:

- a. Taking a genuine interest in others by asking good questions _____
- b. Seeking to understand before being understood _____
- c. Responding with clarity and confidence yet without judgment _____
- d. Pointing out destructive habits with compassion and humility _____
- e. Willingness to understand a different point of view _____
- f. Listening more than talking _____
- g. Celebrating and affirming other people as they are _____

What practical steps can you take to improve in your weakest areas?

2. Communication expert Tim Muehlhoff suggests using these four questions as a mental “understanding” grid whenever we interact with someone:

- What does this person believe?
- Why do these beliefs seem right to this person?
- Where do we agree?
- Based on this knowledge how should I proceed?

“ Good question asking is a skill everyone can acquire. Listening to people’s answers with a genuine interest and a curiosity to ask secondary questions almost naturally opens doors to explain the “mystery of Christ,” even when that’s not your primary objective. **”**

*Tim Muehlhoff
Communication Expert/Author*

3. When you interact with non-Christ followers, are you more afraid of what others might think if you take a stand for Christ or of falling back into your old lifestyle because of negative influences? Pray for courage in either case.

For additional work on your own, visit **The Training Room** for exercises in Godly communication.

AS YOU ENTER

“LET EVERYONE BE QUICK TO HEAR, SLOW TO SPEAK AND SLOW TO ANGER...”
(JAMES 1:19)

Tips on the Tongue

Reflect on each verse in Proverbs and record what God says to you.

- 10:17
- 10:19
- 11:13
- 12:15
- 12:18
- 13:18
- 15:1
- 16:24
- 17:27
- 27:2
- 27:6

Wisdom for the Wise

Read James 3:1-18 and contrast the two types of people.

Natural Tendency

Wisdom from Above

Prayer for Protection

“Keep yourself in the love of God, waiting anxiously for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to eternal life. And have mercy on some, who are doubting; save others, snatching them out of the fire; and on some have mercy with fear, hating even the garment polluted by the flesh. Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, and to make you stand in the presence of His glory blameless with great joy...”
(Jude 21-24)

AS YOU LEAVE

- » PRAY WITH A BELIEVING HEART THAT GOD WILL GIVE WISDOM FOR THE MOMENT.
- » SEE OTHERS AS GOD DOES—LOVED AND IN NEED OF HIS GRACE AND MERCY.
- » USE YOUR TONGUE AS AN INSTRUMENT TO BLESS OTHERS.