

# Neighbors and Nations

## Week 1 | Evangelism

*Lisa Scheffler, author*

*The Big Bang Theory* is a popular sitcom that aired for over a decade. Sheldon Cooper, one of the show's main characters, is brilliant in physics, but often insufferably arrogant and hopelessly clueless in daily life. When his fundamentalist, Christian mother comes for a visit, a conversation about his recent breakthrough discovery turns into an interesting conversation about faith:

*Sheldon: It's quite straight forward actually. It describes a new model of the universe that conceptualizes it as the surface of an inter-dimensional super fluid.*

*Mom: Interesting. You can believe that, but God filling an ark with animals two by two is nonsense.*

*Sheldon: (exasperated) What did they feed the lions, Mother?*

*Mom: (wryly) The floating bodies of drowned sinners, of course.*

*Sheldon: (even more exasperated) Listen. Leonard's mom is a renowned psychiatrist and woman of science. Can you please keep the Bible babble to yourself while she's here?*

*Mom: Are you ashamed of me?*

*Sheldon: Of course not. I love you. I'm just embarrassed by the things you believe, do, and say.*

*Mom: (patting his hand) Aw. I love you too. My little bowl of lion chow.*

While these characters are stereotypes and this exchange played for laughs, their conversation represents a clash of worldviews that many of us recognize. These two people see reality in a way that is incomprehensible to the other, and you get the feeling this is not the first time they've gone head to head.

On the one hand, this is the kind of exchange many Christians dread. No one wants to be perceived as embarrassingly ignorant. On the other hand, Sheldon's mom gets the last word, and the last laugh. And in spite of their differences — as the rest of the episode clearly shows

— they really do love one another. Conversations about faith may highlight their differences, but don't change how they feel about one another.

## Faith Conversations

We want to have meaningful conversations that help nudge people closer to Jesus, whether they are with members of our family, a friend from work, or another parent from our kid's baseball team. In our Neighbors and Nations series, we're considering how we can impact people with the love of Jesus — from those who live with us, to those on the other side of the globe — because our mission is to help others find and follow Christ. This week we're talking specifically about how to have spiritual conversations where we share Christ with others.

Even though we love Jesus and want to see more people trust in him, we may still find it difficult to talk about our faith. Sheldon's reaction to his mom illustrates a couple of our fears. We worry about looking foolish and we are afraid we don't know enough to answer tough questions. But there are other obstacles as well. We're scared of offending people, seeming judgmental and intolerant, or just making things awkward.

So how can we have good, authentic conversations about that help people find and follow Christ? That's a big question worthy of ongoing study and discussion. And this week we're going to look at a three Bible passages that will help get that discussion started.

# Day 1

Even when we are passionate about Jesus and genuinely want to share the gospel with others, we can feel awkward trying to turn an ordinary conversation into a meaningful one. How do we move conversations to spiritual realities that exist beneath the surface of our everyday hopes, worries and fears? Because every person and situation is different, there is no script. The Bible certainly doesn't offer us one. But it does give us some principles to lean on and some examples to learn from.

Today we are going to look at a passage from Colossians to see what wisdom Paul has for us as we consider how to have meaningful conversations about our faith.

## Read

### Colossians 4:2–6

*<sup>2</sup> Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful. <sup>3</sup> And pray for us, too, that God may open a door for our message, so that we may proclaim the mystery of Christ, for which I am in chains. <sup>4</sup> Pray that I may proclaim it clearly, as I should. <sup>5</sup> Be wise in the way you act toward outsiders; make the most of every opportunity. <sup>6</sup> Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone.*

- What does Paul ask the Colossians to pray for?
- What instructions does Paul give about interacting with outsiders?

## Reflect

Paul reminds the Colossians of the importance of prayer. In fact, he insists they devote themselves to it. Why does he add the command to be watchful (or alert) and thankful? Perhaps it's because (just like today) Christians often forget to acknowledge all the ways God responds to our prayers. We ask to see God move in our lives and in the lives of others, but sometimes neglect to recognize and thank him when he does.

Though he is in chains, Paul asks that the Colossians pray for the gospel to continue to go forward. God has revealed his plan to rescue, renew and redeem humanity through Jesus' life, death and resurrection. Christ's sacrifice has eternal significance for every individual who trusts in him. Rescue is available to anyone who will grab the life line.

Paul asks something we might find surprising. Paul asks the Colossians to pray that he might be clear in revealing the message of Christ. Paul, who had come face to face with the living Christ and had preached the gospel all over the Roman Empire, never relied solely on his experience or ability. Paul knew that the whole process of conversion was an act of God and trusted in the Spirit's power to articulate the gospel in a way that reached his audience.

Next, Paul includes two imperatives (verse 5). *Be wise in the way you act* is literally “walk in wisdom”<sup>1</sup> In our daily lives, we are to imitate Christ in how we live and interact with those outside the faith. Second, we should make the most of every opportunity. If we really believe the gospel is good news that will change people's lives for all eternity, we should be constantly on the lookout for opportunities to point people toward Christ.

Our conversations should be “*full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone*” (verse 6). Just as salt enhances the flavor of food and makes you hungry for the next bite, we want to show people kindness, love, and respect while enticing them to want more of Jesus.

If we want our conversations to be full of grace, we must be prayerful listeners. Prayerful, because we must be sensitive to the Spirit's leading. Listeners, because we should be focused on the other person rather than on ourselves. Christian philosopher and apologist Francis Schaeffer once said, “If I have only an hour with someone, I will spend the first 55 minutes asking questions and finding out what is troubling their heart and mind, and then in the last five minutes I will share something of the truth.”<sup>2</sup>

We have to train ourselves to ask questions and listen attentively. If you imagine a conversation traveling down a road, there will be places where you come to an intersection — places where you can make a turn and steer the discussion into new, meaningful territory. For

<sup>1</sup> N. T. Wright, *Colossians and Philemon: An Introduction and Commentary*, vol. 12, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1986), 156.

<sup>2</sup> Covenant Seminary St. Louis, “Francis Schaeffer: The Man and his Message,” *The Thistle* (24 October 2012) <http://www.covenantseminary.edu/the-thistle/francis-schaeffer-the-man-and-his-message/>

example, let's say you're having a conversation with a co-worker and she tells you that her teenager is driving her crazy and she's not sure what to do. You've just come to a conversational intersection. How will you respond?

1. Go straight and keep the conversation on the same superficial road: "Yeah. Kids today. It's tough. But they grow up eventually."
2. Turn right and steer the conversation back to focus on you: "Yeah. You should have seen me as a teenager. I was so awful I thought my mom would lose her mind. There was this one time in high school..."
3. Turn left and ask her a question that might take the conversation a little bit deeper: "Sounds like you're having a hard time. I'm sorry to hear that. What's going on? Do you want to tell me more?"

You never know where the conversation might go after that. Even if it doesn't get much deeper, you've shown that you care about her life. You might be able to offer to pray for her and then follow up another day to see how things are going. If she's receptive, you could take another step that demonstrates the love of Jesus. The Spirit will show you the way. What's important is that you're helping your co-worker feel known and loved, and it starts with a conversation that is full of grace and seasoned with salt.

## Respond

Instead of small talk that keeps us at a superficial level, we can ask thoughtful questions that try to move conversations to a deeper level. Instead of sticking to facts and events, we can be genuinely curious as to what people truly think, feel, and believe.

What keeps you from moving conversations from small talk to something more meaningful? How can you address those concerns?

Who can you have a meaningful conversation with this week?

## Mission Partner Spotlight

This week we're highlighting some of the global workers that Christ Fellowship supports. In a variety of ways, they are sharing the gospel, working to strengthen local churches, and serving communities around the world. You can find out more about all of them on the [Christ Fellowship website](#).

### Juan and Melissa Santafe

Juan and Melissa minister in Columbia. The biggest aspect of their ministry is discipleship and leadership training. Their ministry vision is to plant one church, twelve leaders, and see 1000 Christ-followers by 2024.

# Day 2

One of the main reasons Christians give for not talking about Jesus is fear. We don't want to offend anyone, or seem judgmental. In a secular culture like ours, we're afraid we'll be ridiculed for our faith. These concerns are nothing new. In fact Christians throughout history and in other countries today have faced much worse for being public about their faith.

The early church faced suspicion, ridicule and derision, and in some cities harassment and outright persecution, so the apostles taught them how to respond. In 1 Peter, the apostle instructs the churches in Asia minor to stay faithful in times of distress. In the verses we will look at today, he teaches them how to be a witness for Christ, no matter what their circumstances.

## Read

### 1 Peter 3:15–16

*<sup>14</sup> But even if you should suffer for what is right, you are blessed. “Do not fear their threats; do not be frightened.”<sup>15</sup> But in your hearts revere Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect,<sup>16</sup> keeping a clear conscience, so that those who speak maliciously against your good behavior in Christ may be ashamed of their slander.*

- According to these verses, what should Christians be prepared for?
- How should they respond to questions about their faith?

## Reflect

God is bigger and more awesome than any human threat, and his greatness should motivate us on two levels. First, we should have a reverence for God that outweighs any fear of others. We obey him and hold tightly to his truth. Second, we recognize that Christ is our protector and trust that he will take care of his own.

Even during difficult times, there should be something different about Christians — a peace and light so evident that people not only take notice, but ask about it. Even in ordinary, daily life, we should live as people filled with hope. As others observe the way we endure hardship, make decisions, treat others, and talk about our faith, there should be something worth noting.

The things that set us apart should be magnified when people observe Christian communities doing life together. We should display Christ's love, care, mercy, and compassion even more

brightly as we come together as his church. While we are never indifferent or naïve about the concerns of the world, Christians should display abundant hope in Jesus.

And how do we respond when they ask about this hope? With the gospel. We answer honestly — that our hope comes from Jesus Christ. We tell them the good news of what Christ has done for us through his life, death, and resurrection. The Spirit living in us should set us apart and invite notice. Our beliefs and our lives should be in concert.

Now we should remember that Peter is not prescribing a method of evangelism in these verses. We don't have to wait to be asked to talk about Jesus, and we will probably not get to share the entire gospel in one conversation. Yet, in the relationships that we are building with all kinds of people, we can show people that they are known and loved. If they believe that we genuinely care for them, then they might accept what we believe about Jesus.

Peter tells us to answer with gentleness (or some translations say courtesy) and respect. Once again the Bible calls us to a countercultural way of doing things. Even if we are not facing direct persecution, others may respond negatively to our beliefs. The gospel is offensive to many people. It assaults our pride and calls us to admit that we are sinners who need God's mercy. We are asked to trust that God's ways, and not our own, are best. The grace of God is scandalous because it allows sinners to escape divine justice by punishing an innocent man instead. In light of the gospel we can't nurse old wounds or wallow in guilt. We are called to forgive and accept forgiveness. It's a radical way of life that we should demonstrate, not just proclaim, because that's what makes the gospel believable.

We shouldn't be surprised when people are upset by the gospel, but we should make sure that they are offended for the right reasons and not because we're acting in ways that are obnoxious, condescending, strident and/or shrill when defending our beliefs. The best way we can represent Christ is to be like him by respecting others and living out what we say we believe.

## Respond

In what areas would you like to shine more as a Christ follower so that you invite more people to wonder about the hope you have?

Why is it important to respond to non-Christians with the truth of the gospel *and* gentleness and respect? What happens when we stress one without the other?

## Mission Partner Spotlight

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## Jon and Mary, East-West Ministries

[East-West](#) exists to mobilize the Body of Christ to evangelize the lost and equip local believers to multiply disciples and healthy churches among unreached peoples and/or in restricted access communities. Jon and Mary are global workers supported by Christ Fellowship who minister in Cuba.

# Day 3

In the Gospels, one of the many ways Jesus stands out is in his way with people. From Nicodemus, to Zacchaeus, to the rich young ruler, the Gospels record some intriguing conversations Jesus had with everyday folks. With love and insight, he always pointed people to the truth. As his followers, we should want to do the same.

For the rest of the week we are going to study the encounter Jesus had with a Samaritan woman. By impacting this one woman, many people in her town received the good news. Notice about how Jesus loves, listens, discerns, and responds. Let's see what we can learn from Jesus about helping others find and follow Christ.

## Read

### John 4:6–15

*<sup>6</sup> Jacob's well was there, and Jesus, tired as he was from the journey, sat down by the well. It was about noon.*

*<sup>7</sup> When a Samaritan woman came to draw water, Jesus said to her, "Will you give me a drink?" <sup>8</sup> (His disciples had gone into the town to buy food.)*

*<sup>9</sup> The Samaritan woman said to him, "You are a Jew and I am a Samaritan woman. How can you ask me for a drink?" (For Jews do not associate with Samaritans.)*

*<sup>10</sup> Jesus answered her, "If you knew the gift of God and who it is that asks you for a drink, you would have asked him and he would have given you living water."*

*<sup>11</sup> "Sir," the woman said, "you have nothing to draw with and the well is deep. Where can you get this living water? <sup>12</sup> Are you greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well and drank from it himself, as did also his sons and his livestock?"*

*<sup>13</sup> Jesus answered, "Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, <sup>14</sup> but whoever drinks the water I give them will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give them will become in them a spring of water welling up to eternal life."*

<sup>15</sup> *The woman said to him, “Sir, give me this water so that I won’t get thirsty and have to keep coming here to draw water.”*

- What metaphor does Jesus use to explain spiritual truth?
- In verse 11, who does the woman invite Jesus to compare himself to?

## Reflect

One of the implications of the gospel that shocked the first century was the idea that God’s salvation was in no way dependent on race, ethnicity, class, or gender. Jesus demonstrates that truth beautifully here. The Samaritans were considered by the Jews to be “half-breeds.” Centuries before, the Assyrians had forced the resettlement of Samaria with foreigners from other conquered lands.<sup>3</sup> They had intermingled with the Israelites left there after the Assyrian exile, and they had developed their own take on Jewish religious practices. The Jews despised the Samaritans, and the feeling was mutual. Just by speaking to a Samaritan, Jesus was crossing a significant ethnic boundary — but that wasn’t the only one he was crossing.

In that day, Jewish men avoided talking to women in public. They certainly didn’t discuss deep theological truths with them. But Jesus consistently breaks with this custom by inviting women to be among his disciples. Simply by talking to her, Jesus was showing love.

We’ve lived through droughts here in North Texas, and although our lawns may have suffered, no one died because of it. For people in ancient times living in the desert having a consistent source of fresh (or “living”) water was life or death. The well Jesus and the woman are standing next to was a vital resource for the community, and visiting it was a necessary, daily chore. By offering her “living water,” Jesus has not only piqued her interest, but he’s given her a metaphor that she can easily relate to.

We can learn a great deal from Jesus’ approach. When we talk to people about Jesus, we need to help them bridge the spiritual truth of the gospel with their everyday life. We have to meet people where they are and illustrate how the gospel is something they want and need. The Bible frequently connects us to spiritual realities just beyond our view by comparing them to things in our lives now.

In his book on evangelism, Jonathan Dodson thinks many people understand the basic story of the gospel, but because they can’t relate to it, they find it unbelievable. He makes this observation:

“For many people today, hearing that Jesus died on the cross for their sins is entirely irrelevant. It is an abstract concept that doesn’t connect with the heart. It’s our job to show

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<sup>3</sup> M. G. Easton, *Easton’s Bible Dictionary* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1893).

them how it does. When we speak to people’s deepest desires, dreams, hopes, fears, or longings, we make the gospel believable.”<sup>4</sup>

As we listen to people and get to know them and their struggles, we must ask the Spirit for discernment so we can help connect the gospel to their lives. One way is to paint a picture of how the truth of Jesus Christ speaks to their circumstances.<sup>5</sup> That’s what Jesus does for this Samaritan woman.

Jesus invites the woman to know who he really is. He paints this woman a picture of an unending flow of precious, living water. Imagine having your thirst quenched with a never-ending spring of water that wells up from within? What would it mean to never thirst again? To rest, satisfied and content?

That’s what Jesus offers our thirsty souls. No fear. No lack. But the life-giving Spirit who will meet our needs for all eternity.

The Samaritan woman is definitely interested in what Jesus has to say. “Sir, give me this water so that I won’t get thirsty and have to keep coming here to draw water” (verse 15). Still thinking he’s talking about actual water, she hasn’t yet understood that there is much more to Jesus than meets the eye. We’ll hear Jesus’ surprising response tomorrow.

## Respond

What “outcasts” can you identify in our community? Who are modern equivalents of the Samaritan woman?

Who do you know who needs to know Jesus, the source of living water? Pray for them right now and ask the Father for opportunities to share the good news with them.

## Mission Partner Spotlight

Today we’re continuing to highlight some of the global workers that Christ Fellowship supports.

### **Jolene Balazs, Oral Communication Specialist, E3 Partners Ministry**

Jolene says, “I have been involved in training nationals how to communicate God's Word in culturally appropriate ways through story, song, dance, drama in Panama, Vietnam, Jordan, Siberia, Uganda, Kenya, South Sudan, Togo and Turkey.”

Because of Covid-19 has restricted travel, Jolene and her team are currently doing weekly Facebook and YouTube Live story sessions. Their team also leads Bible storying workshops

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<sup>4</sup> Jonathan Dodson, *The Unbelievable Gospel: Say Something Worth Believing* (Kindle Edition, Grand Rapids MI, Zondervan, 2015) p. 50.

<sup>5</sup> For a useful discussion of using metaphors to help people connect with the gospel, see Jonathan Dodson’s book.

locally and nationally for churches and organizations interested in communicating the gospel and Bible in a more natural way here in the USA.

To learn more about e3 Partners, visit [their website](#).

## Day 4

The conversation between Jesus and the Samaritan woman is not the first time in Scripture that living water is used as a metaphor to help people understand the nature of spiritual life. Many centuries before, the prophet Jeremiah proclaimed: “My people have committed two sins: They have forsaken me, the spring of living water, and have dug their own cisterns, broken cisterns that cannot hold water” (Jeremiah 2:13). People, then and now, are called from cracked wells they dug themselves to the life-giving goodness of God.

Sitting beside a well outside a dusty Samaritan village, Jesus is using the image of fresh, living water to help an outcast see her need for him. As we continue to learn from Jesus, let’s pick up the conversation in verse 15.

### Read

#### John 4:15–30

*<sup>15</sup> The woman said to him, “Sir, give me this water so that I won’t get thirsty and have to keep coming here to draw water.”*

*<sup>16</sup> He told her, “Go, call your husband and come back.”*

*<sup>17</sup> “I have no husband,” she replied.*

*Jesus said to her, “You are right when you say you have no husband. <sup>18</sup> The fact is, you have had five husbands, and the man you now have is not your husband. What you have just said is quite true.”*

*<sup>19</sup> “Sir,” the woman said, “I can see that you are a prophet. <sup>20</sup> Our ancestors worshiped on this mountain, but you Jews claim that the place where we must worship is in Jerusalem.”*

*<sup>21</sup> “Woman,” Jesus replied, “believe me, a time is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. <sup>22</sup> You Samaritans worship what you do not know; we worship what we do know, for salvation is from the Jews. <sup>23</sup> Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in the Spirit and in truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks. <sup>24</sup> God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in the Spirit and in truth.”*

*<sup>25</sup> The woman said, “I know that Messiah” (called Christ) “is coming. When he comes, he will explain everything to us.”*

*<sup>26</sup> Then Jesus declared, “I, the one speaking to you—I am he.”*

*<sup>27</sup> Just then his disciples returned and were surprised to find him talking with a woman. But no one asked, “What do you want?” or “Why are you talking with her?”*

*<sup>28</sup> Then, leaving her water jar, the woman went back to the town and said to the people, <sup>29</sup> “Come, see a man who told me everything I ever did. Could this be the Messiah?” <sup>30</sup> They came out of the town and made their way toward him.*

*Who does Jesus ask the woman to bring to the well? Why can't she comply?*

- When she goes into town, what does the woman tell people about Jesus? (See verse 29.)

## Reflect

Tired of long, hot trips to the well, the Samaritan woman is definitely interested in the water Jesus is offering her. What she doesn't understand is that while Jesus cares about our earthly needs, he is even more interested in meeting our eternal ones. This woman needs her spiritual thirst quenched.

This was a woman who had endured a significant amount of suffering and needed the love and acceptance of Jesus. This woman had five husbands in the past, and was living with a man she was not married to. We don't know why she'd had so many husbands. Could she be a widow many times over? Could she be divorced? In the ancient world, women could not initiate divorce, so if that was the reason, she had been rejected by a string of men. We don't know the full story, but we do know that tragic circumstances must have led to the life she was living when Jesus chose to speak with her. Jesus mentions her immoral living arrangement, but doesn't make it the focus of their conversation.

In verse 20, the woman brings up a source of tension between the Samaritans and the Jews, the proper place for worship. It was a long-standing feud, centuries in the making. And if Jesus was a prophet, then perhaps he could settle that dispute. (And not make any more probing observations about her current marital status, thank you very much.) Jesus' reply in verses 21–24 shows he won't be distracted by such debates, because knowing the answer to this question will not quench her thirst.

God has never been contained by altars or temples or even “holy” mountains. As Spirit, he transcends geography. And although she does not yet understand it, seated in front of her is God incarnate. After his death, resurrection, and ascension, the Spirit of God would come to dwell in hearts of his people, and only the knowledge of and belief in the gospel is needed to enable true worship.

In verse 25 the woman tries one more tactic. If Jesus won't take sides in this debate, she wonders if maybe the Messiah will when he comes and settles this religious dispute. He's already here, Jesus proclaims. “I am he.” This is the first time this admission has been made in

John's Gospel, and it's the Samaritan woman — not Peter nor John or any of the disciples — who is the first to hear.

Again, we can learn how to have fruitful, spiritual conversations from Jesus' interaction with the Samaritan woman. He keeps the focus on himself and the life he can give. In talking to non-Christians, many of us can get sidetracked by secondary issues. We can get pulled into arguments about whatever the controversy of the day is, whether it's the election, abortion, immigration, or the authority of the Bible. Those can be worthwhile conversations, but they aren't the most important ones, at least until the question of Jesus is answered.

Until the matter of Jesus Christ is settled, everything else is just an abstract debate. Your non-Christian friend can share your opinion on every single hot-button issue, but if they don't believe the gospel, it won't matter for eternity. We need to keep the identity of Christ central, because that's what he did.

About this time, the disciples show up with the food they went to get. They are surprised about who Jesus is talking to, but probably know better than to mention it. I'm sure it wasn't the first or last time they were challenged by the breadth of their Lord's reach. From Nicodemus, a respected Jewish leader to a Samaritan woman with a bad reputation, Jesus came to seek and save the lost.

It's not clear how much the woman really understands about Jesus before she rushes off to town, leaving her jar behind. But she's excited enough to tell people about him. And they came out to see him. That's how the gospel always spreads. People telling other people about Jesus.

## Respond

- Taking into account what Paul and Peter have said about grace, gentleness and respect in the passages we looked at earlier in the week, how can we help people see that God is offering them living water?
- Now that we've studied Jesus' entire conversation with the Samaritan woman, how do you see Christ listening and responding with love?

## Mission Partner Spotlight

We're continuing to highlight some of the global workers that Christ Fellowship supports. All over the world, they are sharing the gospel, working to strengthen local churches, and serving communities. You can find out more about all of them on the [Christ Fellowship website](#).

### **Floyd and Tamra Stanley, Agape Ministries International**

Floyd and Tamra are ministering in Cambodia. Agape International Missions (AIM) is a Christ-led, non-denominational, not-for-profit organization that exists to glorify God through our dedicated efforts to love, protect, and care for survivors of trafficking as well as other vulnerable and exploited individuals. Through a holistic approach of rescuing, restoring and reintegrating survivors of trafficking and preventing sexual slavery, AIM seeks to meet

survivors' spiritual, emotional, social, educational and physical needs. Our intention is that they may come to know their worth and value in Christ, develop a dependence on Him, and develop skills for a sustainable life.

## Day 5

This week we've learned some things from Paul, Peter and Jesus about how we can have meaningful, spiritual conversations in the hopes of proclaiming the good news and introducing people to Jesus. We've talked about the tone of the conversations, the importance of connecting spiritual truth with everyday life, asking people to check their wells for water, and about keeping the focus on who Jesus is. Today, think about what you can apply.

### Reflect

Read through the passages we've covered one more time.

[Colossians 4:2–6](#)

[1 Peter 3:15–16](#)

[John 4:6–30](#)

- Summarize what you've learned about having meaningful, spiritual conversations from the passage we've looked at?
- What has been the most helpful or encouraging thing you've discovered this week?

### Connect

The image of the Spirit as a spring of life-giving water is a powerful one. In Isaiah 55 the Lord promises to make “an everlasting covenant” with all who come to him.<sup>6</sup> He calls out:

*“Come, all you who are thirsty,  
come to the waters;  
and you who have no money,  
come, buy and eat!  
Come, buy wine and milk  
without money and without cost.  
<sup>2</sup> Why spend money on what is not bread,  
and your labor on what does not satisfy?  
Listen, listen to me, and eat what is good,  
and you will delight in the richest of fare. (Isaiah 55:1–2)*

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<sup>6</sup> Carson, *John*, 220.

That everlasting covenant is made possible by Jesus the Messiah. All of God's promises are "yes" and "amen" in Christ (2 Corinthians 1:20). The spiritual hunger and thirst that we have are satisfied only in him.

Once we've found him, we should tell others. If you had found a life-giving spring in the desert, you'd share the news, wouldn't you? That's what the Samaritan woman does. The story of her encounter with Christ ends this way:

*<sup>39</sup> Many of the Samaritans from that town believed in him because of the woman's testimony, "He told me everything I ever did."<sup>40</sup> So when the Samaritans came to him, they urged him to stay with them, and he stayed two days. <sup>41</sup> And because of his words many more became believers.*

*<sup>42</sup> They said to the woman, "We no longer believe just because of what you said; now we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this man really is the Savior of the world." (John 4:39-42)*

At this point, the Samaritan woman becomes a good example of evangelism for us to follow. She just tells people what happened when she met Jesus. Isn't that what you and I are called to do?

We are like this woman. Jesus has revealed to us who he really is and we should excitedly bring other people out to see him. We should share our experiences with Jesus and invite others to come and see him for themselves. As they experience him through his Spirit, his Word and his body, we should pray that lots and lots of people come to know him as their Savior.

Who can you invite to come and meet Jesus?

## Respond

We all have people in our lives who we'd like to see trust in Jesus. We can start by praying for them. Who will you pray for today? Based on what we studied this week, take some time now to think about some practical ways you might help them find and follow Christ.

The first step might just be to get to know them better. If they are an acquaintance, co-worker or neighbor that you know little about, invite them to coffee or lunch and simply find out more about them. We are inviting people into a relationship with Jesus. It will often start through a relationship with us.

Ask the Holy Spirit for guidance in how to open up a meaningful, spiritual conversation with people — not because the church is asking you to, or because you've added them to your spiritual to-do list — but because you love Jesus and love that person. Ask questions that might take the conversation a little deeper. Pray and listen attentively.