

Binder Reading: Talking Christianly Sections

The Ministry of Conversation

Hebrews 13:2

“Do not forget to show hospitality to strangers, for by so doing some people have shown hospitality to angels without knowing it.”

- Offering conversation is hospitality in words. Hospitality is a posture of the heart. You carry it with you wherever you go. Hospitality is doing what you can to make other people comfortable, especially people you haven't previously met or who are new to a group. Make new people your focus.

Matthew 25:35, 40

“35 For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, 40 And the King will answer them, ‘Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers,[a] you did it to me.’”

Necessary attitudes about conversation:

- It is up to you to take the risk of introducing yourself and others to new people, initiating conversation, and including people in the conversation group.
- It is up to you to assume the burden of making the other person feel comfortable. With kind, thoughtful questions, you can put the spotlight on them, not you

Someone's name is the most important word in the language.

- Work hard to learn names. Write them down later. Say them at least three times during the conversation.
- If you forget people's names, it's all right to ask them to remind you. You can also ask for their name from someone else.

Show an interest in everyone.

- Choose to show interest, based on each person's intrinsic value as created in God's image.
- Mentally stay on track. Do not let your mind wander, even if you do not find the topic personally interesting.
- Make your body show interest, and your heart will follow. Maintain eye contact, and listen.
- Love chooses what benefits the other person; expect God's grace as you choose to be interested

Listen well.

- Listen with your eyes by maintaining eye contact. Resist becoming distracted and looking at something or someone else.
- Listen by leaning slightly forward or nodding to convey interest.
- Listen actively. Reflect back what you hear them say in order to make sure you understand. "What I hear you saying is.... Is that what you meant?"

Include everyone in a group.

- When you speak, include everyone with your eyes.
- Engage everyone by asking a question to someone across from you instead of just talking to the person right next to you
- Avoid telling inside jokes or stories that not everyone in the group is familiar with, unless you stop and catch everyone else up on the story.

Make introductions. Those who love first, win.

- Initiate introducing yourself to people you do not know.
- Ask questions to learn two or three things about them.
- Say their name often. This will give you a greater chance of remembering it.
- Introduce them to others.
- Look at the people you are introducing them to so they can hear the new name.

Play catch.

- Think of conversation as a game of catch; ask questions that will give people something to throw back. In order to keep the conversation game moving forward, they should throw the ball back to you by asking, "So, what about you? What's new at your job?" Unfortunately, they may not have that skill yet. But you do. So if you are the one answering a question, throw the ball back. Keep the conversation ball in the air.

Good Questions

- Open-ended questions require more than a one-word answer. Use open-ended questions and statements as much as possible.
- Closed-ended questions can be answered in one or two words.
- Follow-up questions are open-ended questions that draw out more information. After your first question, take something that was said and ask a follow-up question to keep the conversation moving

Some Instructions for Talking Christianly

Don't Lie

Exodus 20:16

"16 "You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor."

Psalm 34: 12-13

"12 What man is there who desires life
and loves many days, that he may see good?

13 Keep your tongue from evil
and your lips from speaking deceit."

Proverbs 6:16-19

"16 There are six things that the Lord hates,
seven that are an abomination to him:

17 haughty eyes, a lying tongue,
and hands that shed innocent blood,

18 a heart that devises wicked plans,
feet that make haste to run to evil,

19 a false witness who breathes out lies,
and one who sows discord among brothers."

Don't use obscenities or coarse jokes.

Exodus 20:7

"7 "You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain, for the Lord will not hold him guiltless who takes his name in vain."

Ephesians 5:4

"4 Let there be no filthiness nor foolish talk nor crude joking, which are out of place, but instead let there be thanksgiving."

Don't gossip, slander or spread rumors

Proverbs 11:13

"13 Whoever goes about slandering reveals secrets,
but he who is trustworthy in spirit keeps a thing covered.

Proverbs 16:28

"28 A dishonest man spreads strife,
and a whisperer separates close friends."

Proverbs 20:19

“19 Whoever goes about slandering reveals secrets;
therefore do not associate with a simple babblers.”

Romans 1:29-31

“29 They were filled with all manner of unrighteousness, evil, covetousness, malice. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, maliciousness. They are gossips, 30 slanderers, haters of God, insolent, haughty, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents, 31 foolish, faithless, heartless, ruthless.”

Don't use unkind or hurtful words.

Psalms 64:3, 8

“3 who whet their tongues like swords,
who aim bitter words like arrows,

8 They are brought to ruin, with their own tongues turned against them;
all who see them will wag their heads.”

Proverbs 12:18

“18 There is one whose rash words are like sword thrusts,
but the tongue of the wise brings healing.”

Proverbs 15:1

“A soft answer turns away wrath,
but a harsh word stirs up anger.”

- What is the wise response to anger?

Matthew 5:21-22

“21 ‘You have heard that it was said to those of old, ‘You shall not murder; and whoever murders will be liable to judgment.’
22 But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother[a] will be liable to judgment; whoever insults[b] his brother will be liable to the council; and whoever says, ‘You fool!’ will be liable to the hell[c] of fire.”

- Note: "Raca" was an offensive term used to show contempt for another person.

Don't be argumentative

Proverbs 21:19

“19 It is better to live in a desert land
than with a quarrelsome and fretful woman.”

- This is applicable to both men & women

Proverbs 26:21

“As charcoal to hot embers and wood to fire,
so is a quarrelsome man for kindling strife.”

2 Timothy 2:23-24

“23 Have nothing to do with foolish, ignorant controversies; you know that they breed quarrels. 24 And the Lord's servant[a] must not be quarrelsome but kind to everyone, able to teach, patiently enduring evil,”

Keep your word.

Psalms 15:1-5

“O Lord, who shall sojourn in your tent?

Who shall dwell on your holy hill?

2 He who walks blamelessly and does what is right
and speaks truth in his heart;

3 who does not slander with his tongue

and does no evil to his neighbor,

nor takes up a reproach against his friend;

4 in whose eyes a vile person is despised,

but who honors those who fear the Lord;
who swears to his own hurt and does not change;
5 who does not put out his money at interest
and does not take a bribe against the innocent.
He who does these things shall never be moved.”

Psalm 55:20-21

“20 My companion[a] stretched out his hand against his friends;
he violated his covenant.

21 His speech was smooth as butter,
yet war was in his heart;
his words were softer than oil,
yet they were drawn swords.”

Proverbs 25:13, 19

“13 Like the cold of snow in the time of harvest
is a faithful messenger to those who send him;
he refreshes the soul of his masters.

19 Trusting in a treacherous man in time of trouble
is like a bad tooth or a foot that slips.”

Listen

Proverbs 18:13

“13 If one gives an answer before he hears,
it is his folly and shame.”

James 1:19

“19 Know this, my beloved brothers: let every person be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger;”

Build up and encourage others.

Proverbs 15:4

“4 A gentle[a] tongue is a tree of life,
but perverseness in it breaks the spirit.”

Proverbs 16:24

“24 Gracious words are like a honeycomb,
sweetness to the soul and health to the body.”

Ephesians 4:29

“29 Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for building up, as fits the occasion, that it may give grace to those who hear.”

Hebrews 3:13

“13 But exhort one another every day, as long as it is called “today,” that none of you may be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin.”

Practical Ways to Encourage People

- Tell the people you love that you love them.
- Give a sincere compliment. Look for things you appreciate about people, and tell them.
- Ask people how you can pray for them. Then, if they are comfortable with it, pray with them right then
- Highlight a character strength you observe in them. "I appreciate how reliable you are."
- Ask God to show you the things He likes about others. Then tell them what He has shown you

How You Think is How You'll Speak

James 1:26

“26 If anyone thinks he is religious and does not bridle his tongue but deceives his heart, this person's religion is worthless.”

Luke 6:45

“45 The good person out of the good treasure of his heart produces good, and the evil person out of his evil treasure produces evil, for out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks.”

Philippians 4:8

“8 Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things.”

Questions to Evaluate Your Thoughts Before You Speak

- Is it true? "Will it give an accurate impression"
- Is it noble and admirable? "Should it be imitated by others"?
- Is it right? "Is it appropriate to say at this time"?
- Is it pure? Is it morally clean?
- Is it lovely (loving)? Is it kind? Will it build up those who hear it?
- Is it excellent? Will it motivate others to do what is right?
- Is it praiseworthy? Will it damage anyone's reputation?

Psalms 141:3

“3 Set a guard, O Lord, over my mouth;
keep watch over the door of my lips!”

What to Do with Negative Information

Should You Say It?

- Have you confirmed with the person that the negative information is accurate? "I heard that true?" Assume the best until you have reason to believe differently.
- Would you say it if the person were listening?
- If you would, why are you saying it to someone else rather than saying it directly to the person involved?
- If you have a relationship with the person in question, talk about the negative information with him or her only.

Matthew 18:15

“If your brother or sister sins, go and point out their fault, just between the two of you.”

- If the information must be given to someone besides the person involved, say it only to someone who has authority or responsibility to do something about the situation.
- What would you want the person to do if this negative information were about you?

Luke 6:31

“ Do to others as you would have them do to you.”

- If people trust you with negative information about themselves, assume you should keep it in confidence unless they specifically state otherwise.

Proverbs 11:13

“13 Whoever goes about slandering reveals secrets,
but he who is trustworthy in spirit keeps a thing covered.”

- Don't allow negative information about someone to be included in prayer gatherings unless he or she has given permission
- Generally, remain silent with negative information

Should You Listen?

Proverbs 17:4

“4 An evildoer listens to wicked lips,
and a liar gives ear to a mischievous tongue.”

Proverbs 18:8

“8 The words of a whisperer are like delicious morsels;

they go down into the inner parts of the body.”

Proverbs 26:20

“20 For lack of wood the fire goes out,
and where there is no whisperer, quarreling ceases.”

Proverbs 25:23

“23 The north wind brings forth rain,
and a backbiting tongue, angry looks.”

1 Corinthians 5:11

“11 But now I am writing to you not to associate with anyone who bears the name of brother if he is guilty of sexual immorality or greed, or is an idolater, reviler, drunkard, or swindler—not even to eat with such a one.”

Psalms 15:1, 3

“15 O Lord, who shall sojourn in your tent?
Who shall dwell on your holy hill?

3 who does not slander with his tongue
and does no evil to his neighbor,
nor takes up a reproach against his friend;”

Giving & Receiving Feedback or Correction

How to Respond to Correction:

Proverbs 27:5-6

“5 Better is open rebuke
than hidden love.

6 Faithful are the wounds of a friend;
profuse are the kisses of an enemy.”

1 Peter 5:5

“5 Likewise, you who are younger, be subject to the elders. Clothe yourselves, all of you, with humility toward one another, for “God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.”

Traits of Wise People:

Proverbs 12:1

“12 Whoever loves discipline loves knowledge,
but he who hates reproof is stupid.”

Proverbs 17:10

“10 A rebuke goes deeper into a man of understanding
than a hundred blows into a fool.”

Proverbs 15:31-32

“31 The ear that listens to life-giving reproof
will dwell among the wise.

32 Whoever ignores instruction despises himself,
but he who listens to reproof gains intelligence.”

Proverbs 9:8-9

“8 Do not reprove a scoffer, or he will hate you;
reprove a wise man, and he will love you.

9 Give instruction[a] to a wise man, and he will be still wiser;
teach a righteous man, and he will increase in learning.”

Traits of Fools:

Proverbs 17:12

“12 Let a man meet a she-bear robbed of her cubs
rather than a fool in his folly.”

Proverbs 9:8

“8 Do not reprove a scoffer, or he will hate you;
reprove a wise man, and he will love you.”

Proverbs 13:10

“10 By insolence comes nothing but strife,

but with those who take advice is wisdom.”

Proverbs 12:15

“15 The way of a fool is right in his own eyes,
but a wise man listens to advice.”

Resolving Conflict

To Overlook, or Not

Proverbs 19:11

“11 Good sense makes one slow to anger,
and it is his glory to overlook an offense.”

Get the Plank Out of Your Own Eye:

Luke 6:41-42

“41 Why do you see the speck that is in your brother's eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye? 42 How can you say to your brother, ‘Brother, let me take out the speck that is in your eye,’ when you yourself do not see the log that is in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take out the speck that is in your brother's eye.”

Psalm 139:23-24

“23 Search me, O God, and know my heart!

Try me and know my thoughts!^[a]

24 And see if there be any grievous way in me,
and lead me in the way everlasting!”

Mark 11:25

“25 And whenever you stand praying, forgive, if you have anything against anyone, so that your Father also who is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses.”

Colossians 3:13

“13 bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive.”

Matthew 5:23-24

“23 So if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, 24 leave your gift there before the altar and go. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift.”

Go to Your Friend:

Matthew 18:15-17

“15 “If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault, between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have gained your brother. 16 But if he does not listen, take one or two others along with you, that every charge may be established by the evidence of two or three witnesses. 17 If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church. And if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector.”

Go Gently

Galatians 6:1

“6 Brothers,^[a] if anyone is caught in any transgression, you who are spiritual should restore him in a spirit of gentleness. Keep watch on yourself, lest you too be tempted.”

1 Corinthians 10:12

“12 Therefore let anyone who thinks that he stands take heed lest he fall.”

Assume the Best

1 Corinthians 13:6-7

“6 it does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth. 7 Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.”

John 7:24

“24 Do not judge by appearances, but judge with right judgment.”

Be on their side.

Do not go to people in anger, vengefulness, or bitterness.

James 1:19-20

“19 Know this, my beloved brothers: let every person be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger; 20 for the anger of man does not produce the righteousness of God.”

2 Timothy 2:24

“24 And the Lord's servant[a] must not be quarrelsome but kind to everyone, able to teach, patiently enduring evil,”

How to have the Conversation?

1. Go to the person privately, not publicly
2. Get the facts straight
3. Listen carefully
4. Clear the air as soon as possible and face to face
5. Speak to one issue at a time
6. Sandwich the correction or issue

What to say

Ephesians 4:15

“15 Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ,”

Let the other person express negative feelings

John 8:32

“32 and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.”

Indicate the desired action.

Don't keep repeating your point once you have made it

Avoid sarcasm

Avoid words like “always” and “never”

Avoid coming across as patronizing or condescending

Don't apologize for the conversation

Put the issue in the past

It is not your responsibility to change anyone