

Tips on Talking About Jesus

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I've been on some evangelism excursions where I felt like I was carrying a concealed weapon. "If only they could see the weapon," I thought, "they would click their heels and run." The thought came from experience. I've met many people who were friendly enough until I un-holstered the gospel. Then they ran. But you see, when that happens, it's partly our fault. They feel as if we've betrayed them. We seemed on the surface to be one thing and then, bang!, we became something else. We pulled a concealed weapon.



This brings me to my first tip, *Be yourself*. Act around non-believers the same way you act around your close Christian friends. Speak about the Lord, be loving, live righteously. Your non-believing acquaintances will understand that there's no hidden agenda. This is just who you are. People want to see that you aren't a hypocrite. You live one life, not two. And if you're sold out for Jesus, it will come up in conversations.

A second principle: *Be interested in conversation, not presentation*. Remember that we are all humans, each one of us trying to understand this journey of life. Non-believers are thinking about God, life after death, righteousness, love, and other similar things. Ask them what they are thinking, and then listen. Try to understand them and even try to think with them. We can't always just give a presentation and expect people to be changed. Change is often a long process, requiring that we enter into their world to think and talk with them.

Furthermore, *Don't act like you have all the answers*. It's okay, even helpful, to admit that you don't understand something. After all, you aren't trying to win an argument, you're trying to discover the truth along with the person. So, if a non-believer points out that something you said was illogical, admit it. Think about it with them, go home and work through it, and come back with more thoughts. You would expect the same from them.

Always be improving your understanding of the message. I'm convinced that there is much we have yet to learn about our own message. Yet the better we understand our message, the more effective it will be. Do you speak the way Jesus and the apostles spoke about righteous living, love, forgiveness, resurrection, and the new world to come? When we open our Bibles, we sometimes find that our version of the message is strangely different than theirs. But it may be that their version is far more engaging and penetrating than ours.

Finally, *Remember that our message is a good one*. Yes, we have to talk about the wrath of God, judgment and repentance. But don't forget that our message is one of hope. We're telling people that there is hope for justice and true love. There is hope for righteousness and new life. There is no need to be ashamed of that. Some will believe and some will not, but the news is always good.