

Know Part 2, Rev. Joshua M. Knott, 04/29/07

Theological Foundations & Motivations

Foundation #1 Imago Dei

Foundation #2 Marred Imago Dei (European castles) – every since the fall language has been used to cover up instead of reveal (War of Words), we are actively hiding our nakedness, so-to-speak (surprisingly an amazing point of contact with those who do not know the Lord)

In many ways our role with both non-Christian & Christian friends is to walk around the garden and **ask them** where they are & why they are hiding & the good news of the gospel is that there is a robe of righteousness for both non-Christian & Christian.

Motivation #1 – Jesus knows you perfectly.

Motivation # 2 – Jesus knows what you are going through because he went through far worse

Our ultimate goal is disciples of King Jesus (Mt 28:19-20) & the growth of his kingdom.

We help others get there by pointing people to Jesus

where his fullness intersects with their deficiency,
where his grace intersects with their weaknesses.

To do *that*, we need to get to know people lest we jump straight to yak-ing, lob “truth grenades”* and duck for cover.

We mirror the Wonderful Counselor, when we, in our limited knowledge, seek to know people before we point out where things need to change.

Exercise (to prove we really don’t know folks very well): think of someone in this room you know reasonably well:

What’s their family or origin like? What’s their marriage like? Is he submissive & she authoritarian? Why? Is he/she trusting in Christ alone for their salvation? How do you know? If so, how is their walk with the Lord going? Where is he/she struggling in their understanding of God’s word? How does he/she spend their time when they’re alone?*

[I asked last week] What are some things that get in the way of getting to really know someone? What do you see as the main reasons we don’t?

For many it might be on a heart level. We just don’t care. That’s a Christological problem. That attitude tells me the gospel we preach is not the one we actually believe or practice.

If Christ doesn't care one bit for me, I'm 100% entitled to treat others the same. Our actions preach a gospel, and what I'm trying to say is that if you are secure in the love of Christ, then you will love others & try to point them to Christ & that begins with getting to know, to really know, other people.

What do you see as the main reasons we don't?

Cultural Impediments

- **Up-bringing** (tribal family dynamics)
- **busyness** (spiritual & otherwise) leads to activity-based relationships that sound like staccato conversations
 - o [tripp] "perhaps the simplest reason for our lack of self-disclosing candor is that no one asks. The typical rhythms of our lives mitigate against going below the surface. In the busyness of life it seems intrusive to ask questions that cannot be answered without personal self-disclosure. Yet there is a way in which we all hunger for relationships of that quality. These are the relationships in which the Redeemer does his good work (165)."
 - o Presbytery vs. Twin Lakes,...Session vs. Road-Trip
 - o We can bring relationships back into busyness,...but it won't happen without someone taking initiative. Golf isn't bad, nor is it a waste. Guys need to do stuff. The waste is going for 4 hours without asking each other questions of substance.
 - o **Ephesians 5:15-16** ¹⁵ Be very careful, then, how you live-- not as unwise but as wise, ¹⁶ making the most of every opportunity [lit. redeeming the time], because the days are evil."
- **American listening** is earning talking time
 - o We have lost the art of listening, the flip-side of question asking
 - o **Proverbs 18:13** ¹³ If one gives an answer before he hears, it is his folly and shame. (general principle)
 - o **James 1:19** ¹⁹ Know this, my beloved brothers: let every person be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger;...(emotionally charged setting)
- **Male** culture of non-revealing
- **so much** of little consequence to talk about
 - o out of the well springs of the heart the mouth speaks
 - o we talk about the people & things we love,...

Theological & Personal Impediments

- We Stop at God's Word – God uses means, and you are one of them.
 - o Satan knows the bible **James 2:19** ¹⁹ You believe that God is one; you do well. Even the demons believe- and shudder! Talking about the

Bible very well might become a shield whereby we hide & protect ourselves!

- [tripp] “we buy the lie that we are unique and struggle in ways no one else does...we don’t want to face what our struggles reveal about the true condition of our hearts (164).”
- Non-Biblical categories of acceptable Christian emotions
 - o If we’re honest, when people sound like David in **Psalm 22:1-2** “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? Why are you so far from saving me, from the words of my groaning? ² O my God, I cry by day, but you do not answer, and by night, but I find no rest.” – they bum us out. These sad people defile our happiness.
 - o Carl Trueman (ref21 “authenticity”)
- We believe that question asking, especially about spiritual things, is exclusively an elder thing (teaching / ruling) & not a Christian thing
 - o One – this is one of those “well, that’s how it is – no I can’t show you from scripture” things. That’s because it’s not in Scripture. the Biblical argument is...
 - **Ephesians 4:11-12** ¹¹ And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, ¹² to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ,
 - o Two – I’ve yet to hear someone argue that it’s wise to do things this way. No one has said to me “yes, 10 men, including two pastors” should be the only ones interested in people’s lives, particularly their spiritual health. Because if we’re going to grow as followers of Christ, reach our community, & work as one body, only a handful should do this.

Practical Impediments

- **easier**, less-awkward to lob Bobby McFerrin truth grenades
- **time-consuming** to get into people’s lives
- **fear** - afraid of what we’ll find, afraid of what other people will find,
- **fear** - afraid we won’t know where to go next once we find out
 - o I mentioned suicide as an example of something “beyond” the scope of my training,...but at one point in college the Lord gave me no way out.
 - o Tripp tells an example of a couple who unloaded on him so much that he was speechless. All he could do (professional counselor) was to tell them he would think & pray about it. He writes: “Personal ministry is not about always knowing what to say. It is not about fixing everything in sight that is broken. Personal ministry is about connecting people with Christ so that they are able to think as he would have them think, desire what he says is best, and do what he calls them to do even if their circumstances never get “fixed.” (184)”*
 - o As was mentioned last week – questions in many ways are in & of themselves ministry. “When I ask you questions you would never ask yourself, I am teaching you to view yourself through biblical lenses

...” Good questions redirect people outside of themselves. Good questions challenge people to think like Christ would have them think. Good questions communicate love & leave an impression on people. We need someone to be like Jesus – to ask questions that reach the heart & engage the mind & draw us out of the bushes & into sunlight where we can grow.

- Jesus is the only one who has the answers, don’t let that stop you from asking questions & getting to know people. You don’t know it all & you can’t fix it all, but you know the one who does, & can.
- Also, as a dear brother reminded me last week. Chances are good you know more than you think you know. For one, you know the way to the Father, Jesus Christ. Second, you know enough of the Bible to be able to tell someone that Jesus Christ came to save sinners & be with his suffering people.
- We forget how little people outside the church actually know about Jesus & the Scriptures. For many folks the most they know of Adam & Eve is the little cardboard cut out portrayals on the intro to Desperate Housewives.

- **assumptions**

App 1 - Favorite Vacation Example: (how little we know in any one statement)

We assume we know what people mean when they say “fine” or “rough day”
 We assume we know a person simply by knowing facts about that person
 We don’t ask because we assume “similar” means “identical.”*

“For personal ministry [which is what we’ve been talking about this whole class] to be effective, the principle is simple: Don’t assume – ask.”*

- **Objections**

- Awkward first step. Nobody likes change but a wet baby. It’s the next question that’s on your mind. Who’s going to start implementing this in my Bible study? What if I ask my wife something & it sounds really hokey & lame.
 - When is it appropriate - I get together with so & so once every other week – am I going to ruin our time by getting all serious. I’m dating somebody,...what if I ask & he doesn’t. Do I have to change my tone of voice when I ask a Christ-centered question.
 - Nike – just do it. We’re just called to be faithful & redeem the time. Don’t worry so hard about it. Don’t fear somebody will be like “I heard that question in Sunday school” so you must not mean it.
 - Encourage one another in this – say, “thanks for asking.” Rob Ellis shocked me on Sun. night.
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Surface level – prove show how good it feels to be asked a question & be listened to.

- “tell me more” exercise:

“how did it feel to have some ask you?”

“how did it feel to ask?”

Tripp’s Question Asking Principles:

1. Always ask open-ended questions that cannot be answered with a “yes” or “no.”*

Let’s think of some good open-ended questions to ask a Xn married couple whose relationship seems a bit tense or odd,...

(pg. 175 – Tripp’s list)

2. Ask a combination or survey & focused questions
 - a. Survey – themes and patterns (we’ll talk more about this next time),...but the deep issues
 - b. Focused – one issue deeper & deeper*

Tripp – says people are like hallways, everything you need to know on one hallway with a lot of doors,...your survey questions will open a few doors & take a peek & make some mental notes, your focused questions will enter into a room & look around.*

3. Certain kinds of questions reveal certain kinds of information*
 - a. What – the facts “what did you do?”
 - b. How? – “How did you talk to her?”
 - c. Why? – “Why did you yell so long?”
 - d. How Often / Where? – “Where did this happen?”
 - e. When? – “Tell me what happened at supper”
4. Ask a progressive line of questions in which each question is based on the information from the previous question – “what do I not know about what I have just heard”*

Case Studies/ Applications:

Go to visit someone in the hospital – what do you want to know?

One day a co-worker just out of the blue confesses to you their continued struggle with sex, numerous sexual partners,...what are some good questions to ask?

What about just a dinner conversation with some folks from church?

Here's the worst case scenario – someone will come into my office, Jay's office, when it's too late. They went to family night supper, under shepherd group, bible study, but nobody knew their marriage was falling apart,...and my first question will be, who knew about this. No one. Why? Because people struggling in muck & mire don't naturally jump out of the bushes and confess their shame. God in his love for their very souls, came to Adam & Eve & questioned them into the open where he would deal with them, both with law & with gospel.

Christ-centered, biblically-framed questions not only benefit those asked,...but the answers will often be an insightful blessing to you because your Savior will eventually come to the forefront.

Making Sense of the Data – Ministering to Whole People (Tripp 188)

Fig 10.1

Situation – What is/was **going** on?

Responses – What does the person **do** in response to what is going on?

Thoughts – What does a person **think** about what is going on?

Motives – What does the person **want** out of what is going on?

*means it's either a quote or extremely similar phrase from Paul Tripp's *Instruments in the Redeemer's Hands*