

**Live Out Loud**  
*Courageous and Contagious*  
**Prepare Your Life Before You Open Your Mouth**  
*Starting Spiritual Conversations*  
*Grace Fellowship Church, Pastor Brad Bigney, Feb. 21, 2016*

Before we even open our mouths to share with others, it's important to look at our hearts and lives. It's all about truth, sound doctrine in a day that's filled with deception and lies.

**I Timothy 4:16** "Watch your life and doctrine closely. Persevere in them, because if you do, you will save both yourself and your hearers."

God does want to speak His truth through us! But He always wants to do a great work in us before He ever does something through us.

**I. You Don't Need to be Perfect But You Do Need to be Paying Attention to Your Own Life Before You Open Your Mouth to Start a Spiritual Conversation**

You need to be spending time with Jesus and be aware of the work that He's doing in your own life before you talk to anybody else about theirs!

Awareness of His work in your life creates a readiness and an enthusiasm to speak about it to other people, because the Gospel is no longer just academic or words on a page for you. You're living it out.

Turn to **Ephesians 5:8-21** to read about three ways of our lives we need to pay attention to.

**A. You Need to Keep Walking in the Light Even as You Lean into the Darkness – Eph. 5:8-11**

**Ephesians 5:8-11** <sup>8</sup>For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light <sup>9</sup>(for the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness, righteousness, and truth), <sup>10</sup>finding out what is acceptable to the Lord. <sup>11</sup>And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather expose them."

Walking in the light is far more than just avoiding darkness or surrounding yourself with biblical truth. Read **I John 1:5- 2:2**.

You can't put your relationship with Christ on hold and just coast along on last year's fellowship. You're either cultivating high potency right now – by the choices you're making or this whole Christianity-Gospel-and Jesus-Thing is becoming stale and less real for you.

**I John 1:8-10** <sup>8</sup>If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. <sup>9</sup>If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. <sup>10</sup>If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us."

John says walking in the light means you live with a readiness and openness to admit your own sin and then do something about it.

## **B. You Need to Be Alert and Living for What Matters Most - Eph. 5:14-17**

**Ephesians 5:14-17** “<sup>14</sup>Therefore He says: ‘Awake, you who sleep, arise from the dead, and Christ will give you light.’ <sup>15</sup>See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise, <sup>16</sup>redeeming the time, because the days are evil. <sup>17</sup>Therefore do not be unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord is.”

Two of the biggest ways Christians are living carelessly and unthinkingly: in the way they use their money and in the way they use their time.

## **C. You Need to Be Filled with the Spirit so that Your Life Grabs People’s Attention Before Your Mouth Ever Talks about Jesus – Eph. 5:18-21**

**Ephesians 5:18-21** “<sup>18</sup>And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit, <sup>19</sup>speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord, <sup>20</sup>giving thanks always for all things to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, <sup>21</sup>submitting to one another in the fear of God.”

There are radical differences that should show up in your life!

- 1. Controlled by the Spirit v. 18**
- 2. You’ll be Joyful Instead of Hateful or Morose v. 19**
- 3. You’ll be Grateful Instead of Complaining v. 20**
- 4. You’ll be Humble Instead of Arrogant and Demanding v. 21**

## **II. There’s More than One Way to Start a Spiritual Conversation But it’s More Likely to Happen if You Eliminate Some of the Biggest Spiritual Conversation-Killers**

### **A. Stop Attacking the Other Person’s Belief System Head-On**

“We must learn to find the back door to people’s hearts because the front door is heavily guarded.” – Ravi Zacharias

Ask good questions then listen and let the other person talk. If you ask enough questions many times you can lead them out onto the precipice of their own belief system. It can leave them feeling the incongruity of what they’re holding onto and the shakiness of what they’re trusting.

### **B. Stop Thinking Nobody’s Really Interested in Spiritual Things**

One of the biggest killers to spiritual conversations is our own unbelief in thinking people aren’t interested or won’t be receptive.

**Ecclesiastes 3:11** says God has put eternity in the heart of every person that crosses your path. They’re hard-wired for something more than right-here, right now. Every person you look at is living with a low-grade spiritual hunger and they may not know it yet.

### **C. Get Over Yourself and Stop Taking it So Personally When They Push Back with Negative 'Baggage'**

Recognize that most people you're talking to have already formed an opinion about Christians or church. There's no need to get offended when they start to rail against the church or Christians. Validate some of their suffering and be secure enough in what you believe that you can give them space to emote. Don't interrupt and don't take it personally. When they see that you're willing to listen to what they have to say about it, often they'll listen to some of the things you have to say back.

### **D. Focus On Having a Conversation Rather than Pushing Your Own Agenda**

Let them talk, and to some degree, let them take it where they want to take it. Ask questions and show interest. Be willing to wait on the Holy Spirit as to where you might be able to speak truth into the conversation.

Find out what they care about and what fires them up. The minute you grab hold of the steering wheel of that conversation and try to control it, it's no longer a conversation. It feels more like a sales pitch and nobody enjoys that.

### **E. Stop Being so Self-Righteous and Judgmental and Start Being More Broken-Hearted**

Too many Christians are sending the wrong message to people around them. And it's this: Not only do we not endorse your point of view, we reject you and don't accept you. That lack of acceptance crushes opportunities for spiritual conversations. Acceptance doesn't mean endorsement.

Many times not-yet-Christians are going to say or do things just to see how you'll react. Don't react. Instead, act in love because often that awkward moment is a test to determine whether or not they think you're safe enough for them to engage in real a conversation.

You need to be filled with the Spirit to have a supernatural response of love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control' in the face of whatever it is they've just thrown down in front of you.