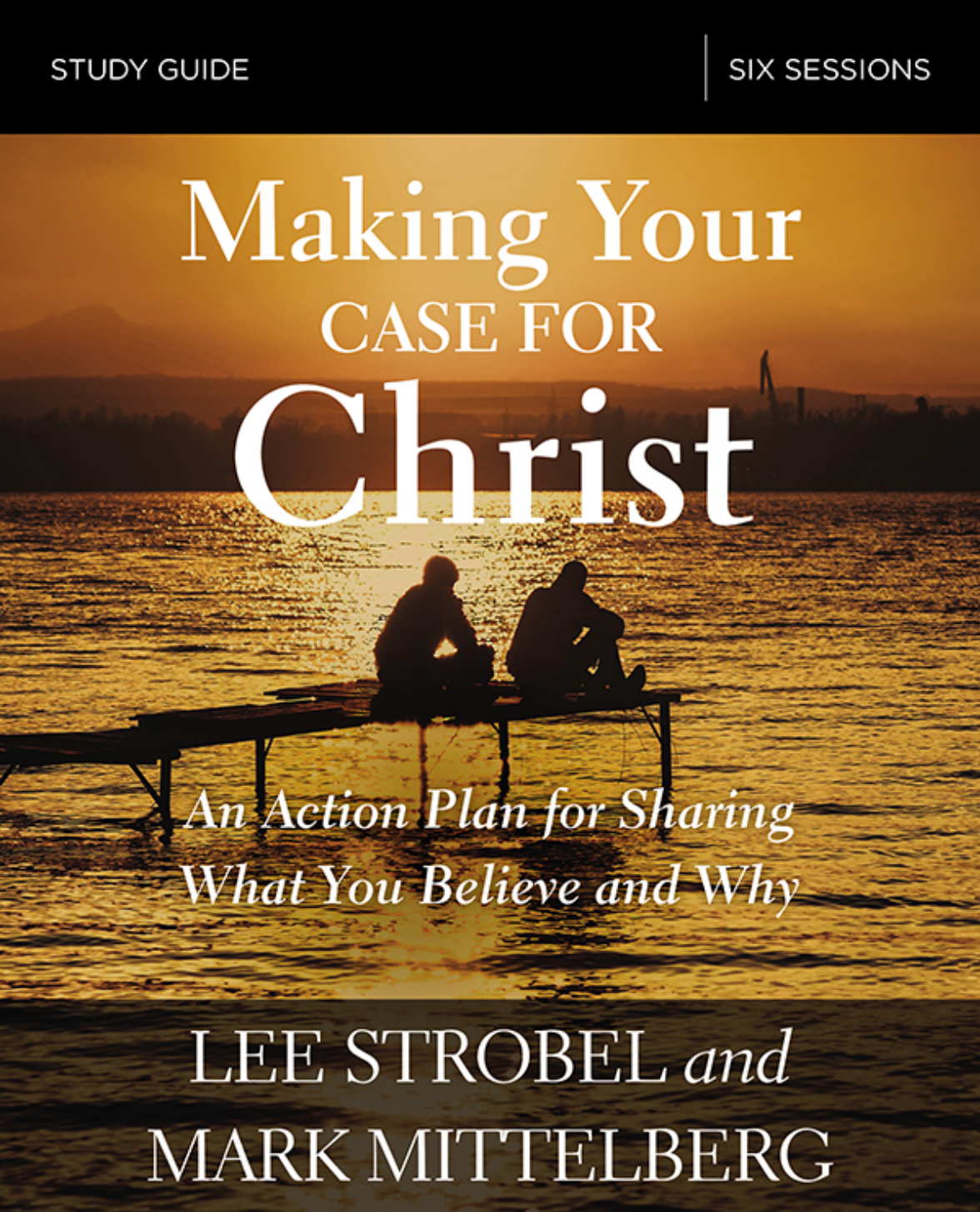


STUDY GUIDE

SIX SESSIONS

The background of the entire cover is a photograph of a sunset or sunrise over a body of water. The sun is low on the horizon, creating a bright, golden glow that reflects on the water's surface. In the foreground, two people are sitting on a wooden pier or dock, their silhouettes visible against the bright light. The overall mood is peaceful and contemplative.

Making Your CASE FOR Christ

*An Action Plan for Sharing
What You Believe and Why*

LEE STROBEL *and*
MARK MITTELBERG

STUDY GUIDE
GROUPS / INDIVIDUALS

SIX SESSIONS

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INTRODUCTION

As followers of Christ, we know, at least at some level, that we're on this planet for higher purposes than to simply live out our days and then go to heaven someday. No, we're here for a much greater reason than that.

Jesus explained his *own* purpose for coming to earth. He told us that he, the Son of Man, came "to seek and to save the lost" (Luke 19:10). He was on a mission to reach as many people as possible with his salvation and leadership, which he offered freely to every person.

But Jesus didn't stop there. Before he returned to the Father, he said to his disciples—and, by extension, to *us*—"as the Father has sent me, I am sending you" (John 20:21).

So we, too, are now on Jesus' redemptive mission. Like our leader, we are here "to seek and to save" everyone around us who will listen to the good news of the gospel. "He has committed to us the message of reconciliation," Paul added. "We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us" (2 Corinthians 5:19–20).

The question is, what might that appeal look like in our increasingly secular and spiritually resistant society? Our central message does not change, of course, but as Paul put it, "I have become all things to all people so that by all possible means I might save some. I do this for the sake of the gospel, that I may share in its blessings" (1 Corinthians 9:22–23).

In other words, Paul was telling us that we—like him—need to adjust our approach in order to optimally connect our unchanging message to the people in our culture, which has moved further and further away from God.

Part of the answer to the question of what our appeal should look like was articulated by J. Warner Wallace, an atheist-turned-Christian who wrote, "In this day and age, evangelism is spelled: A-P-O-L-O-G-E-T-I-C-S."¹ Along with presenting the straightforward gospel, we need to give our friends reasons for *why* our message makes sense and can be confidently embraced as truth. They're often interested in our message and attracted to our Savior, but they want to make certain that what they're considering putting their trust in is truly trustworthy.

That's where Christian apologetics comes in—it helps us explain the logic and evidence that back up our biblical beliefs, and it helps remove the intellectual barriers that keep people from putting their faith in Christ. This is what we've written about in our books over the years, and now we're presenting it in this unique six-session course, *Making Your Case for Christ*. We've pulled together some of the key elements of relational evangelism as well as applied apologetics to help you clearly articulate what you believe, why it makes sense, and how your friends can find and follow Christ like you have.

Our prayer is that this material, along with your times of discussion in your group and your engagement with it between the sessions, will serve to strengthen your own faith while making you confident in your ability to spread that faith to others.

Lee Strobel and Mark Mittelberg

Note

1. J. Warner Wallace, "In This Day and Age, Evangelism Is Spelled: A-P-O-L-O-G-E-T-I-C-S," <http://coldcasechristianity.com/2015/in-this-day-and-age-evangelism-is-spelled-a-p-o-l-o-g-e-t-i-c-s/>.

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

The goal of the *Making Your Case for Christ* training course is to help you understand and articulate the evidence for the biblical record of Christ as well as the facts pointing to the reality of Jesus' life, death, and resurrection. This course will also help you explain the central message of the gospel to your friends and family members who need salvation, articulate the story of how you came to know Jesus as your Savior, and provide you with practical steps for encouraging—even “nudging”—your loved ones to make their own decision to follow Christ.

This course is designed to be experienced in a small-group setting, such as a home Bible study or a Sunday School class, as there is a unique dynamic when you learn in the context of relationships. Ultimately, the idea is not just to gain knowledge but also to experience life transformation, to grow in friendships, and to apply what you learn in your day-to-day life. After all, what better way to discover how to make your own case for Christ than to be with a group of people who are going through the process with you and learning the same things?

Each participant should have his or her own copy of this study guide, because you will gain much more from this journey if you are able to write notes in it during the sessions and then to use it to reflect more deeply on the topics covered during the week. It is also helpful (though not essential) to obtain a copy of *The Case for Christ* book. The videos and material in this study guide are based on information in that book, which develops more fully many of the ideas discussed here. You and your group may also wish to watch *The Case for Christ* movie in its entirety, as each session in this course contains clips from this film to help illustrate the points Lee Strobel and Mark Mittelberg cover in the teaching videos.

The *Making Your Case for Christ* training course is divided into six sessions—one for each week of the curriculum. Every session contains a *Getting Started* section to introduce the main topic, some *Opening Discussion* questions, *Video Teaching* notes, *Group Interaction* questions, a *Group Reflection*, *Conclusion*, and a *Closing Challenge* and prayer.

As a group, you should plan to discuss the opening questions, watch the video, and then use the video notes and questions to engage with the topic. There is complete freedom to decide how best to use these elements to meet the needs of your members. Again, the goal is developing relationships and becoming better equipped to share the evidence for Christ with your friends and family members who need to know God—not just “covering the material.” You are encouraged to explore each topic as a group and discover what God is saying to you.

These times together as a group can be rewarding, refreshing, and often life-changing. Things might feel a little forced or awkward at first, but don’t worry. The members of your group will soon become trusted companions. There is something about learning and praying together that is healthy and invigorating for the human soul.

It is important to maintain a positive and safe environment in the group. The group members should have an opportunity to share what they are learning to the extent they feel comfortable. Don’t feel obligated to participate, but don’t keep silent if you have something that contributes to the discussion. People need to hear what you have to say!

On the other hand, no one should dominate the conversation or impose his or her opinions on others. The group discussion time is a conversation, not a monologue or a debate, and differing views are welcome. People are encouraged to share their emotions, challenges, and struggles honestly, without fear of rejection or ridicule. And, of course, it is especially important to maintain confidentiality regarding what is said.

At the end of each group session, there are three optional *Between-Sessions* activities that you are invited to complete during the week. In the first section, *Study God’s Word*, you will examine three key passages of Scripture that pertain to the topic you covered during the group time. The next section, *Put It into Practice*, will help you develop natural ways to act on the challenge you were given at the end of the group time. In the final section, *Reflect on a Key Story*, you will review a short reading from the book *The Unexpected Adventure* by Strobel and Mittelberg and answer some reflection questions on how to apply its principles to your life.

The goal is simply to engage with these topics on a personal level. You won’t be required to divulge what you write, but starting in session two, you will be given time at the beginning of the meeting to discuss any key takeaways you gained or questions that arose as you did the activities. Often, sharing in such a manner is

the best way to learn and grow, and you might be surprised at how helpful your thoughts are to others. If you have a busy week and can't get to these activities, don't worry. You are always welcome at the group meetings—ready or not!

Ask for and expect the Holy Spirit to speak to you as you go through this course. It's not an accident that you have chosen to participate in this six-week journey. God has great things in store for you, and he will speak to you in ways you might not expect. So take time to pray and meditate on what he is saying. You might want to write down some thoughts for future reference. This is the beginning of a deeper journey with Jesus, and the Holy Spirit will be with you as you seek to *make your case for Christ* to those in your life who need God's touch.

Note: *If you are a group leader, there are additional instructions and resources in the back of this guide to help you lead your members through the study.*



SESSION ONE

HELPING FRIENDS CONSIDER THE CASE FOR CHRIST

*My only aim is to finish the race and
complete the task the Lord Jesus has given me—
the task of testifying to the good news of God's grace.*

ACTS 20:24

Getting Started

Welcome to session one of *Making Your Case for Christ*. We're glad you decided to join us, and we hope you'll be able to continue with the group throughout the rest of these six sessions. Together, we'll learn about how we can better understand, explain, and defend our beliefs as Christians.

Opening Discussion

It's likely that you grew up going to church, hearing Bible stories, memorizing verses, and singing worship songs. That's a great heritage, and it's certainly something to be thankful for. But it can also lead to assuming that the people around you know what you know, or at least understand what you believe and why it makes sense.

But the reality is that more and more people are growing up today without any sort of solid biblical teaching or understanding. If they believe in God at all it's often a fuzzy, generic belief—not a clear understanding of who Jesus really is, why they should trust in him, and the difference it will make in their lives, both today and for eternity.

These people may not know God, but God still loves them and wants to reach them with his offer of forgiveness through Christ. And whether they be in your school, your workplace, your neighborhood, or even your family, Jesus said to “go and make disciples . . . teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you” (Matthew 28:19–20).

*“Go and make disciples . . . teaching them to obey everything
I have commanded you.” — Matthew 28:19–20*

To do this effectively, you're going to have to be clear about *what* you believe and some of the reasons *why* you can be confident it is true. Put another way, you

need to be ready to make your own case for Christ. That's what this six-week study is designed to help you do.

As we begin, let's read together a verse that sets the foundation for all of our discussions: "*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*" (1 Peter 3:15). There are four key elements in this verse. Let's talk about each of them briefly.

- The first phrase says we need to "revere Christ as _____." Why do you think Peter mentions this first? Have you ever seen people try to help others spiritually without making sure that they were right with God themselves? What were the results?
- The second element says we need to "always be _____." Can you imagine a sports team going into an important game without doing good preparation ahead of time? (Maybe a team comes to mind?) The good news is that you're here today—doing some of the preparation Peter was talking about.
- The third element is the focus of our preparation—to be ready "to give _____" to anyone who asks you for the reasons behind your faith in Christ. As we'll discuss today, a lot of people are just a few good answers away from taking the gospel seriously. So, you need to be ready to give them those answers.
- The final phrase in the verse says that you should give your answers "with _____" (some translations list this as verse 16). You live in a culture in which these attributes are hard to find, especially in social media and other online interactions. Why do you think it's so important to address spiritually curious people in a gentle and respectful way?

Getting yourself prepared and taking the kind of approach Peter prescribes will go a long way toward helping your friends understand and consider the case for Christ.

Video Teaching

Now watch the video for session one, in which you'll meet the authors of this course, Lee Strobel and Mark Mittelberg, and hear them discuss the topic of this session: "Helping Friends Consider the Case for Christ." As you watch, use the following outline to record any thoughts or concepts that stand out to you.

Opening Vignette

Some people say, "You can't argue a person into the kingdom of God." While that's true—you need more than just information—evidence and apologetics can play a critical part in breaking down the barriers in that person's journey toward Christ.

Main Teaching

First Peter 3:15 is the imperative that tells us we need to be prepared to give an answer for the hope we have in Christ—and give it gently and with respect.

John Stott said, "Truth without love is too hard, and love without truth is too soft." Jesus had the perfect balance, and he's calling us to seek the same balance.

We need to look into the evidence for our faith. We need to know *why we believe what we believe*. As we gain that knowledge, it will help grow our confidence to share our faith with others.

In the Bible, we read of at least two examples in which Jesus provided evidence to back up his claim that he was the Son of God:

John the Baptist testified that Jesus was the Son of God, but doubts crept in when he was thrown in prison. Jesus told his followers to go back to John and tell them about the evidence they had seen with their own eyes.

The disciple Thomas questioned that Jesus had risen from the dead. Jesus did not shame him, but instead he told Thomas, *Look at the holes in my hands and the scars in my side. Check out the evidence for yourself.*

Paul would sum up his ministry by saying, *We do what we do to persuade people. We want people to know our claims about Jesus are true.*

It is necessary in the kind of culture we live in today, in which people have moved away from a Christian worldview, to be prepared to give an answer for the hope we have in Jesus.

We tend to think people are resistant to hearing the gospel, but the reality is that *we* are the ones who are often more afraid to talk about it! People *want* to talk about spiritual matters.

Movie Clip

In the first scene at the restaurant, see how Alfie brings up spiritual matters after the events surrounding Alison have taken place there.

In the second scene in the car, notice how Alfie asks questions and talks honestly with Leslie about matters of faith.

Video Wrap

It pays to have our antennae up, watching for the opportunities God brings our way to engage people in conversations about Christ.

*“Then you will know the truth, and the truth
will set you free.” — John 8:32*



Group Interaction

We’ve seen how important good answers and information were in the testimonies of both Lee and Mark. We also heard them emphasize the fact that we’ll never be able to give our friends that kind of information unless we first initiate conversations about spiritual matters with them. Alfie did just that in the movie clip we watched during the teaching. Let’s discuss what she did and how it worked.

- In the first scene, Alfie explained that she wasn't at that restaurant, and therefore able to help little Alison, due to mere luck. Instead, she credited Jesus for leading her there that night. Did Alfie's way of explaining that feel natural to you? What might you have said differently to bring up spiritual matters in that situation?

- You might think that what Alfie said was a little forced. But what would have happened if she hadn't taken that risk? Or maybe a better question: what would *not* have happened? Have you taken a similar risk—one that might have felt a bit unnatural, but God used it anyway? How did it turn out?

- In the movie, when Alfie and Leslie talked again, Alfie invited Leslie to come to church with her, and Leslie accepted the invitation. Have you ever invited a friend to church or some other Christian gathering as a way to further your spiritual interactions with them? What happened?

- In the second part of the movie clip, you saw Alfie and Leslie talking in the car after they had gone to church together. What kinds of questions did Alfie ask Leslie? Have you ever just come out and asked your spiritually curious friends about their beliefs or religious background? How have they responded?



Group Reflection

Let's summarize some of what Alfie did well in order to help Leslie:

1. Alfie *served* Leslie (and Lee) by intervening to help their daughter.
2. She *mentioned Jesus* as the source of her ability to help Alison.
3. She gradually *formed a friendship* with Leslie.
4. She *invited* Leslie into an environment where Leslie could learn more about matters of faith.
5. She *asked good questions*, drawing Leslie deeper into conversation.

Now let's discuss ways we can apply these lessons from Alfie in our own relationships (if your group is large, break into circles of four to six people). Take a few minutes to discuss the following questions:

- Who could you serve this week in ways that might help them open up to God's love? What could you do to best assist them? Are you willing to reach out and serve in that way soon?

- Who do you think you could have a real friendship with, and what practical steps could you take to initiate that kind of relationship? Often, we sense that a neighbor, classmate, or coworker would enjoy getting together and going deeper, but we've been too busy or preoccupied. Does anyone come to mind? What might you do this week to initiate or deepen a real friendship? Write down any names or ideas that come to mind here.

- Maybe you've already been serving or spending time with someone you'd like to share your faith with, but spiritual topics just don't ever seem to come up. What could you say that would feel natural, but jump-start the conversation? Try to think of several possibilities, and write down any thoughts or plans here.
- Alfie inviting Leslie to attend church with her was an important part of Leslie's spiritual journey (and Leslie's later invitation to Lee played a major part in his journey, too). So, who might you invite this week? And what should you invite them to? A church service? A study group? An inspiring concert or film? Maybe ask them to watch *The Case for Christ* movie with you? Maybe a reading or crafts group with some Christian friends? A sporting event or fitness club? Other ideas?

If you broke into smaller groups for the above interactions—and if you have the time—ask for members to share a few of their responses and plans with the whole group.



Conclusion

This session has been about how we can encourage our friends to consider the case for Christ. But before we can go deep into the reasons to trust in him, we first need to deepen their trust in *us*—including seeing that we're safe to talk to about these important but personal matters. We saw from 1 Peter 3:15 that God wants us to “*revere Christ as Lord,*” to “*be prepared*” so we can “*give an answer*” to our friends

who have spiritual questions, but to do so *“with gentleness and respect.”* We also learned from the example of Alfie that God can use us when we *serve people, build genuine friendships, initiate spiritual conversations, invite friends to appropriate events, and ask good questions.* The decision to make now is this: will *we* do these things?

Closing Challenge

As you may have already seen in the later parts of *The Case for Christ* movie, Alfie’s small step of mentioning Jesus in the restaurant started a spiritual chain reaction that ultimately led to Leslie, Lee, Alison, and their newborn son Kyle, all eventually coming to faith in Christ. More than that, countless others have come to faith through Lee’s books and talks, Leslie’s friendships, and the movie itself. Like Alfie, we also need to be willing to take small steps of obedience to God—and he delights in turning them into results we can’t even begin to imagine. So, will you take some small steps—little risks with the people you know—this week?

“Our purpose is to reach people with the message of Christ, to see them put their trust in him, and to see their lives and eternities change as well.”

Finishing the Session

For more ideas and examples on how you can start spiritual conversations, see the story-driven book, *The Unexpected Adventure*, also by Strobel and Mittelberg. It consists of six weeks of daily readings that will inspire you to bring up your faith in everyday conversations. Close by praying together and asking God to give every group member wisdom, courage, and opportunities to initiate spiritual conversations in order to tell others about Christ, and why it makes sense to follow him.



BETWEEN-SESSIONS PERSONAL STUDY

Reflect on the content you've covered this week in *Making Your Case for Christ* by engaging in any or all of the following *between-sessions* activities. The time you invest will be well spent, so let God use it to draw you closer to him. At your next meeting, there will be time for you to share with your group any key points or insights that stood out to you.

Study God's Word

In the following section, we'll examine three key Bible verses related to helping our friends consider trusting in Christ, followed by three reflection questions under each verse.

The Priority of Sharing Your Faith

In Acts 20:24, Paul said, "I consider my life worth nothing to me; my only aim is to finish the race and complete the task the Lord Jesus has given me—the task of testifying to the good news of God's grace."

Why do you think Paul had such urgency about sharing the message of Christ with others?

Reflect on your own priorities. What are some of the activities that make it difficult for you to find time and opportunities to share Christ with others? How might you rearrange your life to create more availability to reach out to them?

What practical steps might you take this week to elevate your own sense of urgency in sharing Christ with others?

Taking the Initiative in Sharing Your Faith

In Romans 10:14, Paul asks a string of poignant questions: “But how can they call on him to save them unless they believe in him? And how can they believe in him if they have never heard about him? And how can they hear about him unless someone tells them?” (NLT).

According to these leading questions from Paul, whose job is it to seek out others and initiate spiritual conversations? The person who is far from God? Or is it God’s job? What is our role?

Thinking over the past few months, how many spiritual conversations have you had with people who came and initiated those conversations with you? How many spiritual interactions happened—or perhaps might have happened—after *you* brought up the topic with them?

What friends or family members do you sense God prompting you to talk to about spiritual matters? Can you think of something you might say to bring up the subject? Or is there an event you could invite them to in order to help get the conversation going?

God's Help in Sharing Your Faith

In Matthew 28:18–20, Jesus challenges us with what is commonly referred to as the Great Commission: “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”

In the middle of that passage, Jesus gives his disciples—and, by extension, *us*—a strong challenge. What does he tell you there, as his follower, that he wants you to do?

Jesus has given us an important task. Do you feel up to it? If not, then consider the encouraging news he tells us in the beginning of that passage. How much authority has he been given—and in which domains? Are there any limits to his authority?

So, the one who has *all* authority has issued us a daunting assignment: to go into our world and make disciples. But does he send us out alone? Besides having each other to partner with in this endeavor, who else does he say at the end of the passage will go with us? And for how long will he be there for us? How does *that* news change your feelings about the task ahead?

Put It into Practice

In this session, we talked about ways we could initiate spiritual conversations with our friends. Take a moment right now to think and pray about the person in your life whom you most sense God prompting you to reach out to.

What is his or her name? _____

Where would it be most natural for you to talk with this person?

What kinds of subjects do you normally have conversations about?

Now, write down two to three ideas for ways you could turn those topics into spiritual conversations—whether by bridging from the topic being discussed to one of a biblical nature, or by asking that person

some questions about their own faith background, or maybe by inviting them to a Christian event of some kind. Write down your ideas, and then prayerfully ask God to allow you to put at least one of them into practice this week.



Reflect on a Key Story

The following is a story Mark Mittelberg tells in the book he wrote with Lee Strobel called *The Unexpected Adventure*. It is from the chapter titled, “Being Your Own Eccentric Self.” Read this story, and then reflect on the questions that immediately follow.

Being Your Own Eccentric Self

Mark Mittelberg

“Let me know if you have any questions,” said the waiter as he leaned against a pillar in our out-of-the-way section of a popular restaurant.

It was an exciting but stressful time in my life. Heidi and I had recently moved from our small Midwestern hometown to the big city of Chicago so I could attend graduate school. With a background in business, I was feeling overwhelmed as I began to work on my master’s degree in philosophy of religion.

It wasn’t that I didn’t enjoy the new subject matter or appreciate my professors. I found the studies fascinating. But have you ever tried to *read* any of Kant’s *Critique of Pure Reason*? Try the opening sentence: “In whatever manner and

by whatever means a mode of knowledge may relate to objects, intuition is that through which it is in immediate relation to them, and to which all thought as a means is directed.”

I don’t know about you, but I was pretty sure I could have survived in life without ever having read that information. I was often tempted to ask the question that students frequently ponder: “Are we ever going to really *use* any of this stuff, or is this just a way to see who’s fully committed to getting a degree?”

My mind was full of those kinds of thoughts that evening as Heidi and I, along with some new friends from school, sat down at this well-known Italian eatery. The aroma of freshly baked Chicago-style stuffed pizzas wafted through the air. The waiter who seated us was friendly and outgoing. It was after he had gotten us our drinks that he leaned against the pillar and posed his offer to answer any questions we might have.

The restaurant was starting to fill up, causing the rest of the waiters and waitresses to scurry around in order to handle the surge of people. So I was surprised that he was so casually lingering by our table—until I realized that we were in an area that was out of the sight of his boss. The waiter was using us as an occasion for a break. I think he was hoping we would have questions about, say, how they tossed their pizza dough or what ingredients went into their sauce. Just so he wouldn’t have to move his feet for a few minutes.

What struck me was how open-ended his offer had been. He had simply invited us to tell him if we had any questions—but he hadn’t specified that they needed to be related to the menu. An idea hit me, and it came with enough force that I wondered if the Holy Spirit might be prompting it: *I’ve got all kinds of questions. Maybe I’ll put what I’ve been reading from Kant to good use, raise an unusual topic, and see what happens*, I thought. *Perhaps God could use it to get us talking about things that matter more than good pizza.*

As a question began forming in my mind, doubts started to creep in as well. *He’s going to think I’m really weird—and so will my wife and our new friends.* But I also thought it was strange that he was just standing there, as if he was waiting for something to happen.

“Yes,” I piped up cheerfully. “I have an important question.”

“Great!” he replied. “What is it?”

“I’ve been reading Immanuel Kant, and I was wondering,” I said with feigned curiosity, “do you think that the categories of the mind apply to the noumenal

world in the same way they apply to the phenomenal world?" (I was fairly sure I knew what I was talking about, but at any rate I felt safe that he wouldn't know one way or the other.)

He looked at me, surprised. Then he smiled and shot back with a spirited tone, "I'm not sure, but I once heard about a scientist who looked through his telescope and thought he saw God. Pretty strange, huh?"

"That's not at all strange," I said, amazed at his response. "I don't know if this was the guy you heard about, but I recently read a really interesting book by a well-known scientist named Robert Jastrow, called *God and the Astronomers*. It was his observation of the incredible order and intricacy of the universe that led him to finally conclude that there must be a God. His book shook up a lot of people in the scientific community."

"Wow, that's interesting," he said. "I really don't think about God too much. What did you say the name of that book was?"

Suddenly, we were off to the races in a fascinating spiritual conversation. Before I knew it, I was explaining some of the scientific evidence that supports our Christian beliefs, and a couple of us described the difference Christ had made in our lives.

We eventually got around to figuring out what kind of pizza to order, but I don't remember much about the food that night. What stands out in my mind was the surprising discussion we had and how it all resulted from what felt at the time like a crazy impulse to throw out an unusual remark.

Our interactions didn't end with that encounter. I asked him if he would be interested in reading Jastrow's book, and he said he would. So a few days later I brought him my copy, along with a couple of other smaller books I thought would provide good answers to some of his spiritual questions.

He seemed sincerely grateful for the information. And although I never had the chance to interact with him after that, I'm glad I took a little risk that night by tossing out a playful and unexpected question. As a result, look what happened: on an evening when we were anticipating only a quiet informal dinner, the four of us got the chance to tell someone about Jesus, and I was later able to put some potentially life-changing materials into his hands.

Who knows how God will ultimately use this impromptu interaction in his life? It makes our hot and spicy pizza—as good as it was—seem bland by comparison.

Have you ever sensed that God was prompting you to say something that could lead into a spiritual conversation but might be viewed as a bit unusual? Did you take the risk? Where did it lead?

It's easy to get bottled up in these kinds of situations, held back by fear about how you'll look or sound if you say what came into your mind. But if God is leading, what's the real downside of taking this small risk? How might God use it?

Notice in the story how Mark not only took a risk to get a spiritual conversation started but also followed through—not only by having a real discussion with the waiter, but also by bringing him a copy of the book he had mentioned. How do you think this maximized the impact that he had with the waiter?

In Colossians 4:5, Paul tells each of us to “Be wise in the way you act toward outsiders; make the most of every opportunity.” What situation are you in that has an open door for you to take things further spiritually? What's the next step? Will you write it down—and then act on it this week?