

#3- Only then do I want to hear my friend's religious story- real, genuine, not canned

- 79% of the unchurched said, "I don't mind talking to a friend about their faith if they really value it."

1. Build your listening skills – "empathetic listening"
 - Silently bless your friend as you talk
 - Be fully present- eye contact, nod, smile, giving verbal & visual affirmation
 - Clarify content and reflect feeling with compassion (read between the lines, listen to their heart)
 - Do NOT interrupt, criticize, cross examine, argue, try to come up with "one better"
 - If a disagreement arises- back off, just focus on making sure they feel understood
 - "Don't take the bait to escalate. Conflict is inevitable, being a jerk is optional." – Jay Payleitner
2. Our goal
 - You want to truly understand your friend (vs. making your point)
 - You want your friend to FEEL understood & S_____
 - Genuine dialogue only happens when people feel safe

TAKING IT HOME- B.L.E.S.S. EVERYDAY

1. Begin with Prayer- pray blessing for 5-8 friends every day- RPMS (relationally, physically, mentally, spiritually). Ask the Holy Spirit if He wants you to take any action steps.
2. Listen- seek to understand- close your mouth, open your eyes, heart & ears- make your neighbor feel understood and safe

❖ **WHAT'S GOD SAYING TO YOU?** – write it down, pray it back, share it with others!

Heavenly Father, fill me with Your Spirit, so that my mouth stays quiet, while my heart, eyes and ears stay open, and see real needs. Use me to bless my neighbor, listening to them, helping them feel understood and safe. Use me to help them take another step closer to Jesus. I especially feel You saying to me...

B.L.E.S.S.- LISTEN

3/20/22, Lk 2:46

5 EVERYDAY WAYS TO LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR & CHANGE THE WORLD!

Pray for your friends for Easter- 4/17!

GETTING OUR FEET WET- the maids & butlers loved him

- B- Begin with Prayer
- L- Listen
- E- Eat
- S- Serve
- S- Share your Story

DIVING INTO SCRIPTURE

STEP 1- CLOSE YOUR MOUTH

- Pro 17²⁷ The one who has knowledge uses words with restraint, and whoever has understanding is even-tempered.
- ²⁸ Even fools are thought wise if they keep silent, and discerning if they hold their tongues.
- Pro 18² Fools find no pleasure in understanding but delight in airing their own opinions. 18¹³ To answer before listening—that is folly and shame.
- Jas 1¹⁹ Understand this, my dear brothers and sisters: You must all be quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to get angry. ²⁰ Human anger does not produce the righteousness God desires.
 - Most of us don't listen, but are preparing for our r_____.

➤ How can we close our mouths...

1. Count to ten
2. Get filled with the Holy Spirit
 - Gal 5²² But the Holy Spirit produces this kind of fruit in our lives: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³ gentleness, and self-control.
 - Jas 3² Indeed, we all make many mistakes. For if we could control our tongues, we would be perfect and could also control ourselves in every other way. ¹⁷ But the wisdom from above is first of all pure. It is also peace loving, gentle at all times, and willing to yield to others. It is full of mercy and the fruit of good deeds. It shows no favoritism and is always sincere. ¹⁸ And those who are peacemakers will plant seeds of peace and reap a harvest of righteousness.
3. Get filled with love- see the next 3 steps

STEP 2 - OPEN YOUR EYES

Mt 9 ³⁶ When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. ³⁷ Then he said to his disciples, “The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. ³⁸ Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field.”

- Look for RPMS where God actually wants to bless (make full, good)- (Lk 2:52)
 - **R**elationally (family, friends, work)...
 - 1/3 of children aren't raised with their dad, and 45% are below the poverty line
 - Loneliness- the next health epidemic
 - People have half the friends they did in 1990
 - No roommate, romantic partner, or animal
 - Friends are too busy or untrustworthy
 - New situation and/or feel out of place, different
 - 70% are not engaged in their job
 - **P**hysically (health, finances, sleep, addictions)...
 - Diabetes, heart disease, cancer...
 - 40% of Americans don't have \$400 in savings
 - Our bodies generally need 9 hours sleep, but we get 6.5-7.5
 - Addictions- drug, alcohol, sex, pornography
 - **M**entally (worry, anger, wrong thoughts) ...
 - Depression rate tripled during Covid
 - Teenage suicide increased 56%- Covid, social media (many teens check their phones every hour or 2 through the night)
 - **S**piritually (hunger for God, 10 commandments, faith)
 - 87% of Americans say they believe in God
 - 87?% don't regularly go to church
 - Eternity- in heaven & a new earth, hell- pain, sorrow, fire, worms
- Use your eyes to help your k_____ - pray these needs back in you daily BLESS prayer

STEP 3 - OPEN YOUR HEART – VALUE THEM

Php 2³ Don't be selfish; don't try to impress others. Be humble, thinking of others as better than yourselves. ⁴ Don't look out only for your own interests, but take an interest in others, too. ⁵ You must have the same attitude that Christ Jesus had.

1. Without love, the best techniques will seem m_____ (Paraphrase Talking- after 1 year, marriages back to the same)
2. People don't care how much you know till they know how much you c_____!
3. If you don't love/value your neighbor...
 - You will see them as a problem or project
 - Yourself as the fixer or advisor
 - And they will see you as a j_____
4. But if you do love/value your neighbor...
 - You will see them as valuable
 - Yourself as fellow servant and l_____ (Kairos)
 - And they will see you as g_____
5. Use your knees to help your heart- begin with prayer in private. Silently bless your friend when you meet in public, silently affirming their value- made in God's image, Jesus loves them & died for them, they are valuable!

STEP 4 – OPEN YOUR EARS - SEEK TO UNDERSTAND

- Lk 2⁴⁶ After three days they found him in the temple courts, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions.
 - Pro 20⁵ The purposes of a person's heart are deep waters, but one who has insight draws them out.
1. When we think of evangelism we tend to think of Jesus' p_____ ministry- a lot of talking. But what did He do in private? Jesus asked over _____ questions:
 - Woman at the well- Will you give me a drink? (Jn4)
 - Paralytic at the pool- Do you want to be healed? (Jn 5)
 - James & John's mother & 2 blind men- What do you want me to do for you? Mt 20
 2. What are people looking for in a “religious” friend?
 - #1- Listen without j_____
 - 2/3 of Americans say no one in their life listens to them without judgement (everybody wants to give their advice, when we just want support, understanding)
 - #2- Let me draw my own c_____
 - Both friends and God are saying step out of the way
 - Trust God to work in your friend's heart just like He did in yours (from B.L.E.S.S. pp. 8-11)