

# SMALL GROUP QUESTIONS

## Reaching the Lost

Questions written by Mark Collins

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## ANNOUNCEMENTS

**Small Group Announcement** - Right now, some people in your life are far away from God. What if you took the risk to pull together an informal, non-threatening gathering at a coffee shop where seeking friends could raise their questions about Christianity?

Join us on March 8<sup>th</sup> as Garry Poole, from Willow Creek Community Church, one of America's largest churches, equips us to reach our city with the love of Jesus Christ in a revolutionary way.

Garry has been Willow Creek's key evangelism leader since 1992, and is widely recognized as the nation's leading innovator in reaching spiritual seekers through informal discussion forums. Passionate about impacting people for Christ, Garry and his team have trained thousands of facilitators to effectively assemble gatherings for spiritual seekers to explore biblical truths in their own settings. His award-winning book, *Seeker Small Groups*, provides a detailed blueprint for engaging spiritual seekers in life-changing conversations. Garry is also the author of *The Complete Book of Questions*, primary author of the *Tough Questions* series, and co-author of *Experiencing the Passion of Jesus*.

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## MINISTRY PRAYER REQUESTS

*As "small groupies," you are the heart and soul of this ministry--who better than you to lift up the Small Group Ministry in prayer? So, it's up to you, you can spend time in your small group praying for these things (weekly or occasionally), or you can pray during the week on your own time. If you'd like to be added to our Pastor's Prayer Team, just let us know. Mark Collins, the Small Group Pastor, would love your prayers! We send out a monthly email of his personal and ministry prayer requests. Just contact Andy Rodgers at [andy.rodgers@therocksandiego.org](mailto:andy.rodgers@therocksandiego.org). May God work through your prayers mightily!*

**Reaching the Lost:** Pray that all of our groups participate in our up coming Small Group sign up. Also, in March, the Small group ministry will be training and deploying a new type of small groups called: Coffee Shop Communities (See Small Group Announcement).

**Current Small Group Leaders/Small Groups:** Pray that all of our Small Groups take time to follow up on all the new people trying to get into small groups.

**Potential Small Group Leaders:** Pray that our current leaders continue to give their ministry away and develop future leaders to reach their full potential in Jesus.

**Small Group Staff:** Pray that God gives us the favor and wisdom to rebuild the Small Group team. Ask Him to order our steps in every decision we make.

**The Rock Body:** Pray that the Rock Army grows deeper and deeper in the stewardship of their lives in Christ.

## MEMORY VERSE

*“He sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, to preach the acceptable time of the Lord”*

*(Luke 4:18-19)*

## SMALL GROUP QUESTIONS – ARE YOU A CONTAGIOUS CHRISTIAN?

Have you ever noticed that some words have a tendency to take on an emotional edge after a while? Words like sacrifice, repentance, and even prayer can stir up emotions deep within our souls, especially when we're really trying to walk with Jesus. Maybe it's because when we hear words such as these we don't have warm fuzzy feelings and if we're being honest these words sometimes conjure intense feelings of guilt. "Evangelism" is another one of those words that can send shivers down one's spine. I think that all Christ followers would agree that is incredibly important to share the message of God's love; yet by the same token so many of us feel like failures when we try to share our faith, and it seems all but a few really gifted people really do it well. It's funny, for most Christians doing evangelism is a lot like going to the dentist: no one really enjoys doing it, but it has to be done every once in a while. To be honest, my first experiences with evangelism weren't all that positive. I can sum up my "evangelistic process" by dividing it up in three phases: the "shark phase," the "carp phase," and finally the "dolphin phase." During my shark phase I believed that it was my job to attack! You've been around sharks before, no matter what a person says they always turn the conversation abruptly to Jesus. Unfortunately after a while when people saw me coming they would make up excuses like, "I can't talk now, I've got to polish my dog." Finally, most of my contacts became total strangers, that's because when all of my un-churched friends would see me they'd run for cover.

This rejection caused me to believe that Christians and non-Christians had one thing in common: They *both* hate evangelism. My pain led me to the "carp phase." Carps are lethargic bottom feeding fish, living off the food that other fish discard. I guess I really never consciously decided that I would stop sharing my faith I just thought that when my friends really wanted to know about Christ they'd come to me. The problem was: they never came. They were fine with "my" decision as long as I kept it private and personal. What I didn't understand there's more than one way to bring God's love to a lost world. Fast forward a couple years to when I finally entered the "dolphin phase." Dolphins combine the strength of the sharks and carps. Dolphins are enthusiastic about life, and realize that the results of their evangelistic efforts are up to God. Dolphins understand their mission in life: to share God's love using both their voices and their actions. Dolphins are happy and loveable because they understand that they are loved. Dolphins are able to do tricks (like unselfish acts of great kindness) but are never on the attack. I believe most of us, deep down, want to be dolphins for when we begin to act like sharks, our message of "love" becomes difficult to believe. Frankly, when I acted like a carp I lost my zeal for helping people and life became all about me. Now I see myself as a co-worker with the Holy Spirit, letting Him do what He can only do. My role is to obediently enjoy the flow of God's life through me as I share my joy with others. Who knew that a dolphin's life could be so good?

## Getting Started

It's been said that "perception is reality." What comes to you mind when you hear the word "evangelism?"

Can you think of some benefits when people find forgiveness and relationship with Jesus, to us, to others, and to God?

## Digging Deeper:

There's no way around it, risking what other's may think about you and talking to them about their great need is rooted and fueled by love. This love, to be effective must be expressed both in actions and words, and is best achieved through relationships. Helping someone find Jesus is both a process and a partnership. It's a process because for most people they have to hear and experience the gospel many times before they truly understand. Also, their understanding is totally dependent upon God who reveals Himself and His love.

1. Read Romans 10:14; 1 Corinthians 3:5-6. How does God use people, a process and a partnership to bring people who are far from God into a love relationship with Him?
  - a. How does this knowledge help take the pressure off you when it comes to reaching the lost?
2. When God forms a partnership with us to reach the lost He uses our personality and unique gifts. In Acts 2: 36-41 (please read) Peter evangelized in a very *direct* style. Can you think of some characteristics that accompany Peter's style? Can you think of some dangers of using this approach?
3. Later in Acts 17:1-4 Paul *reasoned* with the Jews at Thessalonica. There Paul chose a very *intellectual* style to speak to the wisdom of the Greeks. What would be some characteristics of this type of evangelistic style? What would be some dangers of using this approach (like: getting stuck on intellectual points)? Are there particular types of people who'd appreciate this style? What do they share in common?
4. Read John 9: 13-34. Here, a man born blind from birth was healed by Jesus. When questioned by the Jewish leaders the formally blind man offered a very *testimonial* style when speaking of Jesus. What are some traits necessary to use this type of evangelistic style ( one example might be: a clear communicator)? Can you think of some real advantages to adapting this style? Dangers? With whom would you be most inclined to use this style? Why?
5. Read Luke 5:27-32. Matthew used his personal influence with some of his friends and invited them to a party where Jesus was the guest of honor. Matthew used an *interpersonal* style of evangelism to reach those who he cared about. What were some of the dangers that Matthew faced at this kind of meeting? Can you name some traits of people who seem to have personal influence? What are some of the dangers to this evangelistic style (one example could be becoming overwhelmed by the needs of your lost friends)?
6. Read John 4:7-30. Here, Jesus does the unspeakable and begins a dialog with a Samaritan woman. She in turn takes His offer to receive the "water of life" and in turn *invites* everyone she knows to

do the same. Can you think of some traits of someone who frequently uses the *invitation* style of evangelism? What are some dangers when using this style?

7. Read Acts 9:36-43. Tabitha caught the eye of God because of her great works of *service*. So much so that God sent Peter to raise her from the dead. Tabitha used *service* as a platform for evangelism. Can you think of some examples of people who have done this? What traits do they share in common? Can you think of the dangers to this kind of evangelistic style ( an example would be: getting the credit for your good works)?

### ***Bringing it Home***

8. Take a moment to consider all the following evangelistic styles: *direct, invitational, testimonial, interpersonal, intellectual, and serving*. Which of the following styles are you most comfortable? Which of the following styles do you believe that God wants you to grow?
9. Take a moment to list a person in the following categories:  
Family Members-  
Friends-  
Co-workers-  
Acquaintances-  
Neighbors-

How could you use the different evangelistic styles to help them come closer to God? Could you pair up with someone in your group to help you?

This lesson is all about learning to live an evangelistic lifestyle. Small group leaders would you announce to your group our Coffee House community training that were having on Saturday, March 8<sup>th</sup> Garry Poole, Evangelism Pastor from Willow Creek is probably *the* most leading authority on the subject, and he will be here. At the conference you'll also receive Gary's Book *Seeker Small Groups* which is normally twenty-two dollars. Breakfast and Lunch and childcare are provided. For more info look back at the announcement portion of the small group questions or sign up for the event on our website at: [www.therocksandiego.org/eventcalendar/3876/](http://www.therocksandiego.org/eventcalendar/3876/)