

Witnessing To Truckers: Steering the Conversation- Part 1

There are two basic ways of using a conversation to present the plan of salvation to someone. The first is simply to ask the person a question about their spiritual condition. A question like, "If you died tonight, do you know for sure you would go to Heaven?", is the most direct way to get the conversation started. This is fine under certain conditions such as going around passing out tracts. For the most part however, the best way is to already be involved in a conversation with the person. You can gradually steer the conversation to something where you can ask this question or a similar question to get the person thinking about their spiritual need. By approaching the subject gradually in this way, you can also gauge how interested the person might be in allowing you to present the Gospel to them.

Think back over some recent conversations you have had with truckers and other people. What were the subjects you discussed. How did the conversation start? How did the various topics come up which you discussed? Now try to think about ways you could have directed the conversation to the topic of the person's spiritual need.

Let me give you an example. One of the things people, especially truckers, talk about is how things seem to be going downhill in this world. Problems always seem to come up in a discussion sooner or later. It might be the economy in general or the trucking industry specifically. Sometimes, the person you are talking to will open up somewhat about a particular problem they are facing, personal or otherwise. If you have been a good listener, this is more apt to happen if they sense you would be interested. These types of topics are good springboards to present the Gospel and a relationship with Christ as at least the initial part of a solution to their problems.

Topic Lead-ins

World Conditions and Personal Situations

One of the ways, I have steered conversations is when the topic of discussion was about how the world situation and living conditions were getting worse. Sometimes I will agree and say something like, "You know, the Bible tells about how things will gradually get worse and worse. The Book of Revelation gives some descriptions of how things will turn out in the future." If they seem interested, I will give them a short thumbnail sketch of some of the prophecies in the Bible. I don't go into a full length dissertation or sermon on the subject. I just tell them enough to show them there are some serious things which will be taking place soon and there is a way to be ready for them. This is where I start weaving in the plan of salvation. Sometimes the person is interested and sometimes they aren't. You can't win them all. Sometimes they will accept Christ then and there. At other times, you will realize it will take some time for the Holy Spirit to work on them and do some more of His convicting work.

Using this approach, however, requires that you know something about the subject you are using as a springboard to present the Gospel. If you are going to use the subject of prophecy as in the above example, you need to study up on the subject. Reading a couple of good books such as Lindsey's book, *There's a New World Coming: An In-Depth Analysis of the Book of Revelation* or Tim La Haye's book, *Revelation Unveiled*, will help you get enough of a handle on prophecy to be able to talk about it and use it as a way to steer a conversation towards the plan of salvation.

Stress

Another topic where you can steer the conversation is about the stress truckers experience on the road. They love to talk about how crazy four-wheelers drive or how other factors in the trucking life gets them stressed out. Here is a good opportunity to tell them how you deal with the problem. You can say that you used to feel the same way, but you found a way to combat the problem of stress. Tell them that the fact you are a Christian has been a great help in coping with the

stress. (Note: Make sure you are honest about this. They will know if you are sincere or not.) Admit to them you get stressed out just like they do, but you have a method of dealing with it that works for you. Here you can launch into a discussion of how, at the end of the day, you sit down and read some verses in the Bible slowly and think about them. Tell them how you sometimes read and ponder the verses in the Bible that tell how God is looking out for you such as Philippians 4: 6,7 and Matthew 6: 25-34. Tell them that you can claim these promises from the Bible because you have a personal relationship with God through faith in Jesus Christ. Tell them it works. Tell them anyone can have the same access to the promises by simply trusting Christ as their Savior. At this point, if they are interested, you can present the plan of salvation.

Marital Problems

Another topic which lends itself to presenting the plan of salvation is how trucking has affected a trucker's family life. Being gone from home for long periods of time can create stress in his or her marriage. If you are a married Christian trucker, you can tell how the fact of both you and your spouse being Christians has helped you build a strong marriage in spite of the fact that you have to be away from home for long periods of time. Tell how you sometimes pray on the phone with your wife while you are gone. Tell how being gone from home makes being home even more enjoyable because you and your spouse don't take each other for granted like some married couples do. Tell how being a Christian gives your spouse confidence in your faithfulness to her while you are on the road because you are both dedicated to Christ and committed to living according to the Bible and your spouse knows it. Tell them how being a Christian has helped you love your spouse even more and therefore helps you remain faithful to them while on the road. Tell them how, when you are home, you and your spouse attend church and how that makes your marriage even stronger. This type of testimony is an excellent way to present the Gospel to someone who may be having marital problems due to their being on the road a lot.

Loneliness

Another topic you can use is the problem of loneliness on the road. This is usually a problem for all truckers at times, but especially for single truckers who are divorced, widowed, or never married. This is probably one of the most powerful topics you can use for witnessing to truckers if you can give them answers they truly believe will work. One of the main causes of feelings of loneliness is, believe it or not, a sense of meaninglessness. If a person has no sense of direction or purpose for their life, lonely times can be a difficult problem with which to deal. If a person has a good, solid sense of purpose for their lives, getting through periods of feeling alone can be circumvented and even eliminated for a good part. God made man a social creature. He made man to need human companionship. In the very first chapter of the Bible, God said it is not good for man to be alone. However, loneliness is something which a person can feel even when they are around other people. A person can even feel lonely inside of marriage if there is no rapport or fellowship with their spouse. There are sometimes, though, when loneliness is due to the fact that a person has no general sense of purpose for their life. This is one of the ways, being a Christian can help. Christianity is the only way to fill that God-shaped void people feel in their lives. To use this topic as a means of presenting the Gospel, explain to the person, that becoming a Christian is the only way to start filling that void in their life. For one thing, that void they are feeling is a spiritual void which only Christ can fill. But they won't be able to experience that fullness until they trust Christ as Savior. Christianity also fills that void by giving a person the meaning to life God intended us to have. For the Christian, this life is only preparation for the life hereafter. When we get to Heaven, we won't be just sitting around on clouds playing a harp. We will have work to do and responsibilities even though we won't think of it as work up there. We will be in a state of rest even while we are carrying out the duties we will have in Heaven. In other words, our work will also be our pleasure. In this life, God is working to develop our character for the work He has for us in Heaven. Knowing this should give the Christian a sense of purpose, knowing that our lives down here are for the purpose of preparing us for Heaven. When I get ready to go on a vacation, I prepare for it with a happy anticipation getting things ready to go. This life should be a similar experience for the Christian. Even though we have trials down here on earth, the things God has given us to do here on earth is in order to prepare us for our future role in Heaven. Ephesians 2: 10 tells us God created us to do good works. This includes both the work here on earth and also work we will be doing in Heaven. It is only as we go about doing those works that we have a sense of purpose and contentment. Explaining this to a person facing loneliness can give hope to that person and make them open to presenting the plan of salvation to them. By explaining that becoming a Christian will give them the purpose God intended, they will be able to deal more effectively with their problem of loneliness. But the truth of this fact can only be seen once that person becomes a Christian. This topic then, is another way you can steer the conversation to the point where you can tell them how to be saved.

As you look over your past conversations with truckers and others and evaluate your future conversations, you will be able to see other topics you can use to steer the conversation into a direction where you can witness to people. One important necessity is to ask God to show you ways in which you can do this.

In the next article, I will give you two important questions you can ask a person to gauge their spiritual condition and also use as a launching pad to present the plan of salvation.