

A Biblical Starting Point

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Often times we find ourselves in federal, state, or private secular facilities doing resort and leisure ministries. When given permission to go into such places, there are often limitations made. One of the main limitations is, “We don’t want you coming in here pushing your beliefs on our guests.” Basically, this means they do not want us to start an evangelistic conversation.

On the other hand, resort and leisure settings are places where people go for refreshment and to quench an inner thirst a setting very similar to one we find Jesus in at Jacob’s well. John 4 is a record of the events that took place there. We can use Jesus’ example to know how we can do evangelism in resort and leisure settings without openly starting an evangelistic conversation.

Jesus started by putting himself where the woman was. He did not require her to come to his territory. Nor did He force his way into her territory. Instead, He met her in “neutral” territory. Also, Jesus let the woman know He, too, was there because He was tired and thirsty, just as she was. The woman, therefore, was not likely to have put up barriers that would have prevented or negatively prejudiced her hearing the Spirit’s call.

Resort and leisure settings are “neutral” territories. People enter such places often hurting and seeking but at the same time allowing their “guards” to drop. They want to find others there like themselves. When we go to these settings, we must be willing to meet people where they are. Without trivializing the gospel, we must present ourselves in a fashion that complements the setting, letting others know we are there for similar reasons as they are. Jesus shows us that it is okay to sit by the well for a conversation rather than stand on the well to “preach.”

Jesus also illustrated that we do not have to start a spiritual conversation to have an evangelistic conversation. Jesus knew the woman at the well needed to talk about such matters, but He also knew that she was not expecting to do so. Therefore, He allowed her the freedom to move the conversation in that direction. By simply answering her questions with leading responses, He opened the door for her to ask Him to tell her about His “beliefs.”

In resort and leisure settings, people are not necessarily expecting to discuss spiritual matters. Nor are they necessarily willing to listen to what you have to say. However, if they are the ones asking the questions, they will want to know the answers. By witnessing to people in this manner, we can operate within the limitations of not “pushing our beliefs on the guest.” We are giving the guest and/or employees the opportunity to engage us in spiritual and evangelistic conversations.

These are but two things Jesus can teach us about doing evangelism in resort and leisure settings. Take the time to reread John 4 and other accounts of Jesus ministering and witnessing. Allow the Holy Spirit to open your eyes to see unique ways of turning the limitations of man into opportunities to get people more interested in hearing the good news of Jesus Christ.

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