

The Follow-Up Question

“Hey, are you busy right now?”

What does that question do to your mind and emotions? You are immediately on guard, because you know there will be a follow-up question asking you to do something. Depending on what that something is, it could be very pleasant or very unpleasant. The follow-up question will guide the direction of conversation that follows.

“How was your week?” This question may start a conversation that could lead to many destinations. The follow-up question often determines that destination. What is the destination for a disciple-making conversation, and how do we use good questions to map our route?



Questions are powerful in a discipleship relationship because they provide the disciple the opportunity to think about, discover, and express the truth they need to grow. When we express the truth in our own words, we own it. When the truth we speak is God’s word, it is life-giving. The Holy Spirit will use God’s word in the life of the disciple to conform them to the image of Jesus Christ.



To put it another way, the destination of a discipleship conversation is an encounter between the disciple and the Lord Jesus. The map is some number of steps from whatever the person is thinking about as the conversation begins to that destination. The disciple-maker is the guide to help the other disciple take those steps by asking questions.

The goal of each follow-up question is to move a conversation toward the disciple being able to express God’s word for themselves so that they encounter Jesus in His sufficiency for them.

For example, a conversation could go like this:

“How was your week?”

“Frustrating.”

“What did you find frustrating this week?”



“It seems like I have some important things I should be doing that keep getting crowded out by all kinds of things that need to get done that, in the end, don’t seem as important.”

“What is important to you? Which unimportant task can you replace with an important one this week?”

You could point to Jesus as an example since He had both an important mission as well as many demands and requests that filled His time. “How did Jesus deal with that dilemma? What can we learn from Him?”

But more than using Jesus as an example, the disciple needs Jesus to supply their need. Passages like James 1:5 and 1 Corinthians 1:30 point us to Jesus as our source of God’s wisdom in this world. You could ask an open-ended question like, “If you invite Jesus into your weekly schedule, how can He give you wisdom for this challenge?” Now we have reached the destination. They have an opportunity to interact with the truth of scripture in their own words, but also interact with Jesus.

The next time together, the first question can be, “How did your life change as you invited Jesus into your schedule this week?” And the journey continues.