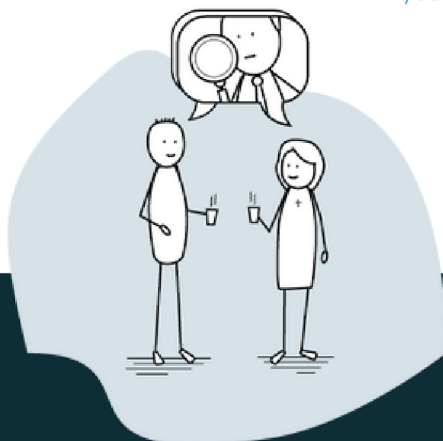


1. CONVERSATIONS THAT ARE CALM

In your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness* and respect, having a good conscience, so that, when you are slandered, those who revile your good behavior in Christ may be put to shame.
1 Peter 3:15-16 [ESV]



* "Gentleness" means to be calm in the face of a negative situation.

Ever found a spiritual conversation a little anxiety-producing? Perhaps it's because you are unsure of what to say next or worried about how they will respond. When we are anxious we lose the ability to think calmly, and can become reactive and defensive. Consider this example of the difference calm thinking can make.

Meet Zac and Amy. Zac and Amy are work colleagues. Amy is a Christian. This is the conversation they have over a Monday morning coffee.

Zac: What do you think of our new boss? Looks like another micromanager.

Amy thinks to herself: Be gentle, keep calm and speak up for Jesus. Reactive thinking would be to jump in and grumble and gossip.

Amy: I'm probably not the best person to talk to about this. I'm trying really hard not to grumble and gossip at work. It makes work go better that way. But... also because I'm a follower of Jesus.

Zac: I didn't know you were a Christian. Not that I have a problem with it. If it's good for you it's good for you. Religion is not for me.

Amy: You just said religion isn't for you. What do you mean by that?

Zac: It's just not for me.

Amy thinks to herself: Ok Zac's said twice it's not for him without any explanation. My calm thinking is telling me to leave it for another time.

Your Turn to Try: Look for signs that you are becoming more anxious in a spiritual conversation. Work on thinking calmly rather than reactively.

Share your Story! Come back and log your story at dive deeper.org.au

This excerpt is from an ongoing conversation between Zac and Amy as part of our "Having Calm Conversations" course. If you'd like to learn more about how to think calmly rather than reactively, then consider signing up at citybibleforum.org/courses.