



Gospel
in Society
Today

CONVERSATIONS OF SUBSTANCE

Bible Study

1. STUDY ONE

Conversations of Substance: Why has it all become so difficult?

Last year ended with the now infamous tweet ‘conversation’ between Andrew Tate and Greta Thunberg in which Andrew asked Greta to: ‘Please provide your email address so I can send a complete list of my car collection and their respective enormous emissions.’ Greta’s response cannot be published here.¹ It was not a surprise: two people with different opinions playing the game of mocking and discrediting each other in public. The surprise would have been if one party had deliberately deescalated to genuinely engage and listen to the other.

This provides an example of a problem we face in our time and place. We find ourselves in disagreement with people, yet are no longer able to have the kind of respectful discussions that have been possible at different times in our history. In our cultural context, many of us are finding that the disagreements over significant and practical issues are sharper, more personal and resulting in the termination of relationships and reputations. As a society, there are simply some things we are no longer free to debate in the public square. More people hide their opinions on more issues more often than in the recent past.

How then can we have the kinds of conversations we need to have as human creatures who need to learn to live in this world together? And for those of us who are Christians, how can we have conversations with others beyond mundane observations about the weather? This is important for us, as it is often our more substantial conversations that deepen our relationships with each other and enable us to grow spiritually. Also, it is often in these

¹ [Greta Thunberg ends year with one of the greatest tweets in history | Rebecca Solnit | The Guardian](#) (viewed online 28/4/2023)

conversations that we can most naturally share our knowledge and love of the Lord Jesus with those who do not yet know him.²

In order to tackle some of these questions, in this study we will begin by thinking about barriers to good conversations in our current context. Subsequent studies will consider some principles of how we might think of conversations constructively and where listening might sit in our theological framework. We will conclude in the final study in this series by thinking through some practical strategies for difficult or intense conversations.

How did we get here?

Conversations both expose and engender our relationships. They alert us to points of tension and relational conflict but they also enable us to understand and grow in our relationships with one another. In every generation there are technological, cultural and social factors that threaten relationships in all kinds of ways. In our time and place, these include: smart phones, social polarisation, smaller and more isolated households and disconnections within our various communities. While some of these are not inherently bad for relationships, the combination of these and other factors deplete our capacity to connect through speaking and listening to each other.

It is unnecessary to add to the breadth of material on these issues, but it may be useful to draw our attention to two factors that make conversations particularly difficult.

² Interview with Dr Carolyn Russell (13/3/2023) Dr Russell is a General Practitioner and Counsellor. She is the co-founder and now, director of Foundations Counselling Centre in Brisbane. We are indebted to Dr Russell for sharing with us her expertise on relationships from a Christian perspective.

Speed

First, we do not have the capacity for the speed of information with which we are constantly bombarded. Our smart phones and other screens have us continually connected to a broad spectrum of information that we often feel obliged to access and process.³ Most of us do not have the time, energy or expertise to research and understand the context of this information to appraise it with diligence or confidence. Thus, we are left at the mercy of others to interpret it for us. This deepens our dependence on whichever ideological ‘tribe’ we feel most connected to and we tend to adopt their interpretation, reinforcing our commitment to them.

Simultaneous with the increased speed and volume of information is the pace of life, which leaves many perpetually exhausted and stressed. Most people are trying to balance life and work expectations that are incompatible and are beyond their capacity to fulfill. We have lost the skills to know ‘...how to live slow to taste and see and savour.’⁴ Instead, we seek to fulfill unrealistic expectations by increasing the speed of our lives, which technological advances in the last 50 years have enabled.

This increased speed of life and information means that we have diminished capacity for conversation. Of course, we continue to chat about inconsequential matters, but to explore together substantial matters of importance we require time to reflect on the information available to us to understand what we think ourselves. Conversation itself requires time and space and effort, all of which requires energy and capacity, both of which are stretched thin. In order to have substantial conversations where we are not merely gathering the thoughts of our tribe and reiterating them, we would need to radically shift how we spend our time.

³ [Total data volume worldwide 2010-2025 | Statista](#) Graph: Volume of data/information created, captured, copied, and consumed worldwide from 2010 to 2020, with forecasts from 2021 to 2025 in zetabytes. As recently as 2010 this was measured as 2 zetabytes, growing to 64.2 zetabytes in 2020, with projections to 181 zetabytes in 2025. (viewed online 28/4/2023)

⁴ Interview with Dr Russell (13/3/2023)

Safety

Society has increasingly moved to value safety over truth. This value affects us all in various ways by virtue of living in our culture and being constrained but also shaped by it. The ascendancy of safety relates not just to physical safety but also to emotional safety. When safety becomes absolute, differences in opinion (and even nuances) are increasingly construed as threatening. This phenomenon conditions us to value sameness of thought and avoid conversations which may uncover differences. There is little space to accept those whose lives and choices differ from our own. This is even true for Christians, despite the lives of so many key figures in the Bible being shown to make choices many of us would find confronting.⁵ Conversation therefore becomes a context for tribal markers to be displayed and safe, familiar alliances constructed or maintained. It cannot be an exchange of views that enable us to grow to know others who are different to ourselves.

It is not surprising in a culture that increasingly values emotional (and other forms of) safety over all else, that we might (implicitly or explicitly) cancel 'toxic' people who are different to ourselves and redouble our efforts to meet a particular tribal criterion. We seek safety.

The Real World

These observations have been made by many from different parts of the social and political spectrum. They are not startling. Yet, they do help us to see why having these difficult and necessary conversations with each other is particularly fraught in our time and place. If we refuse to acknowledge the limits God has placed on us as human beings (for example: Job 14:5, Eccles 1:13-15), we are likely to find ourselves functioning poorly in different contexts, especially our relationships with each other. Conversations are increasingly difficult to undertake, particularly when we disagree with each other and more care and good will is required on both sides.

⁵ Interview with Dr Russell (13/3/2023)

This begs the question of how we might proceed. Society is not going to change for our convenience, and we need to have these conversations, so how might we think well about pursuing them? Specifically, what are some theological principles that might undergird how we think about and practice speaking well with one another? We will turn our attention to this in the next study.

STUDY 1 DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. In your opinion, what is the biggest barrier to conversations in this current context?

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2. How do you manage the 'speed' issues in your life: the perceived need to process so much information quickly and to live life in a hurry?

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3. What do you think about the emphasis on safety? When might be it helpful? When does it interfere with human relationships and flourishing?

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4. What are some important principles that we might need if we are going to try and have difficult conversations?

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5. Who in your world would you most like to have a substantial conversation with, both to deepen your knowledge of that person and how they think about life and to share yourself with them on a deeper level? How would you like to pray about that?

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2. STUDY TWO

How Jesus Governs Our Conversations

Conversations are basic to human relationships. While they vary in depth they all enable us to understand and connect with one another. We are made by God to love him and to love one another, and so it is not surprising that something as basic to relationships should have substantial theological underpinnings. Here we will consider together how God must shape our view of ourselves, others and truth as we engage with our neighbour.

How do I see myself?

First, it is worthwhile to think about how we view ourselves, particularly when we disagree with others. Although many of us would assent to original sin and the effect of sin on our lives after our conversion, we do not often apply this thinking to our minds. We rest in our belief that we can think clearly and objectively. If we acknowledge a bias, it is one we are sure we can fully understand and calibrate. Yet, Scripture teaches that we are altered by sin in all of who we are⁶. (Romans 3:23) It also demonstrates that the effects of the Fall continue after conversion affecting even our capacity to think⁷. (Romans 12:1-2) In short, we are all wrong and we do not know how or when or even why.

How do I see my neighbour?⁸

Second, we all fall short of God's glory and Scripture specifically links to this to unwillingness to love our neighbour properly. (1 John 3:8-10) In order to reform our thinking on this, Calvin helpfully points us to understanding the debt of all we owe to all people through the lens of

⁶ *Westminster Confession of Faith* VI and [The-Gospel-Gender-Sexuality-Full-Paper.pdf \(gist.org.au\)](#) p. 12-19

⁷ *Westminster Confession of Faith* VI.v, IX.iv and [The-Gospel-Gender-Sexuality-Full-Paper.pdf \(gist.org.au\)](#) p. 12-13

⁸ This study is indebted to Dr Carolyn Russell for her time and expertise and part of this section arises out of a conversation on 13th March, 2023.

recognising the image of God in another.⁹ (Romans 13:8ff) This equips us well to examine our hearts as we strive to love as followers of Jesus Christ. We aim to repent of any tendency towards determining our neighbour as beneath us, whether this arises from a difference in ethnicity, class, living arrangements, politics or anything else. Even where our neighbour disdains or sins against us, we are to ‘...remember not to consider people’s evil intention but to look upon the image of God in them...’¹⁰ The fear of a God to whom we know ourselves to be accountable for our attitudes and actions towards *his* human creatures shapes and deepens our determination to love them well. Further, we have the startling example of the Lord Jesus, whose love for us was so strong that he remained with us, even ultimately dying for our sins despite knowing the depths of our unfaithfulness. (John 2:24-25) We of all people know what it is to need love, and the example of Jesus demonstrates the shape of love of the ‘stranger’¹¹ whom he commands us to recognise as our neighbour. (Luke 10:25-37) This difficult, supernatural attitude is cultivated within our naturally selfish hearts by his own powerful Spirit.

How do I see truth?

Most Christians have affirmed or reaffirmed their commitment to truth as postmodernism has unravelled objectivity across the Western world, eviscerating entire disciplines in its wake. This sense of truth being real and objective provides an existentially difficult moment for Christians in conversations with those with whom we disagree. We do not accept that truth is malleable to the extent that it can contradict: unicorns either exist or they do not. More troubling for Christians is our certainty that truth pertains to more significant matters than the non-existence of mythical creatures. We maintain that morality is objectively true, communicated and underwritten by Almighty God.¹² (Ephesians 4:17-24) So, we can experience dissonance as we talk with someone who believes that all morality is arbitrary and

⁹ *The Golden Book of the Christian Life* Book 3, Chapter 7 in *John Calvin: Writings on Pastoral Piety* in series *The Classics of Western Spirituality* Ed. and Trans. Elsie Anne McKee (Paulist Press: New York, 2001)

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 7.6, page 276

¹¹ Conversation with Dr Russell, 13/3/2023

¹² *Westminster Confession of Faith* I.iv-v

must be decided by context alone. This is often particularly sharp if we have a sense of the personal cost to human flourishing in how this seemingly random morality is being applied to powerless people.

While some experiences are subjective and may be understood as personal 'truth', Christians are committed to propositional truth, external to ourselves and arising out of knowledge of God. If the resurrection were able to be disproven historically, we would discard our faith in the Lord Jesus as a nonsense and our behaviour would demonstrate this. (1 Corinthians 15:13-14, 32) As Christians we believe truth to exist, and by virtue of its objective nature, we understand our relationship with truth to be one of submission to this external reality, graciously given to us in Christ. (John 14:6)

Further, truth humbles us. In view of our weakness as sinners and our finitude as creatures, we can claim neither comprehensive grasp of truth, nor unfaltering understanding of it. Instead, we look to Jesus. He gives truth clearly in Scripture, but is not limited to normal avenues. He may use unusual means: a donkey's pertinent questions begin to reveal truth to a prophet; a wicked high priest Caiaphas, proclaims the true reason for Jesus' death. (Numbers 22:28-30; John 11:49-52) This forms the Christian's view of herself: as a learner of truth, submitting to it out of reverence for Christ. We stand under truth as those who submit to the Lord who owns truth as he owns our very selves.

We believe that there is truth, that it can be known and that we do not own it: Jesus will and does give it to whom he will. We are committed to what we know, yet open to this being informed and reshaped in ways we might not expect.

What is a conversation?

These reflections entwine to enable us to think well about how we might best have substantial conversations through which we might learn to love and honour our neighbour as a fellow

image bearer. Knowing God's truth is an immeasurable gift, but it does not put us in the place of God. Instead, as we learn to love our neighbour, brought into our lives by a sovereign God and engage in conversations with him, we are not threatened by his beliefs. Our commitment to objective truth gives us stability and clarity, but our knowledge of ourselves as sinful and limited enables us to engage with those beliefs humbly. Instead of choosing the easy path of tribal alliances, we discipline ourselves to love and to open ourselves to this different person as a neighbour to whom we owe a debt of love.¹³ We do this out of obedience to Jesus himself.

These categories diminish or even destroy the increasingly normal practice in our world to 'win' conversations because they genuinely humanise both ourselves and our neighbour. It is the kind of work we expect our good God to be doing in and through our lives. Yet, how might this look and sound different to a conversation on Q&A for example? What kinds of practical conclusions might we make out of these global categories? Specifically, how will this shape how we listen to those with whom we disagree? These issues will concern us in our next study.

¹³ Conversation with Dr Russell, 13/3/2023

STUDY 2 DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. In what ways does God's own Spirit transform our minds and hearts as we read Scripture? In what practical ways might we better co-operate with him in this?

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2. How has sin affected you? Which areas of your life that are affected by sin that you haven't thought about much? What difference does it make that Jesus has died for you and you are being transformed into his image by his Spirit?

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3. Read Luke 10:25-37. How does Jesus' parable help us understand more about love? Who are the strangers in your life that you struggle to recognise as your neighbour? How would you like to pray about that?

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4. How does John 14:6 help us to be both confident in truth and humbly submissive to it at the same time? What difference does it make that Jesus himself is truth?

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3. STUDY THREE

Learning to Listen

In our increasingly fractured society we do agree about one thing: listening is a virtue. But what constitutes listening? How might we do this in a way that demonstrates our Christian convictions and yet communicates our desire to differentiate ourselves from positions that might offend our consciences?

Listening as a skill

Dr Russell helpfully points us to the work of mathematician and psychologist Anatol Rapoport. He suggested that summarising the other's position enabled discourse to continue and arose out of listening. Rapoport's aim was to express someone's speech so aptly that the person being listened to felt that their thoughts were being expressed better than they had articulated them.¹⁴ He encouraged the listener to offer this summary, together with any points of agreement and anything the listener had learned from the person. Rapoport's aim was to change the emotional texture of the disagreement from a 'fight' to a 'debate', rather than to provide a solution. "Whether game theory leads to clear-cut solutions, to vague solutions, or to impasses, it does achieve one thing. In bringing techniques of logical and mathematical analysis gives men an opportunity to bring conflicts up from the level of fights, where the intellect is beclouded by passions, to the level of games, where the intellect has a chance to operate."¹⁵

'Active listening' is used widely today in situations as diverse as hostage negotiations through to sales. It is widely seen as a fairly predictable way of making a connection with another person. It is not just listening that is enough for this, however, but incorporating what the

¹⁴ This study is indebted to Dr Carolyn Russell for her time and expertise and part of this section arises out of a conversation on 13th March, 2023. Dr Russell helpfully summarised Rapoport's position in this conversation.

¹⁵ 'The Use and Misuse of Game Theory' in *Scientific American* December, 1962, p114

person is saying (their content) with who they are revealing themselves to be. Speaking this back to them so that they recognise themselves and their position is the point at which the connection is achieved.

Listening as a Christian discipline

As Christians, we are free to borrow this technique, though not to use it as a tool to manipulate the person or the conversation. Instead, we use it as a means to make a connection with a stranger who seeks to divide themselves from us and thereby change them into a neighbour whom we are to love and honour.

Listening for a Christian is a discipline that falls naturally out of our relationship with Christ Jesus. It is suitable for a people who have come to understand themselves as fundamentally spiritually inadequate. Conversion requires a repentance that insists we humble ourselves to receive a forgiveness that we neither have earned nor can earn ourselves and indeed, requires God's own Spirit to so transform our minds as to hear and to accept.¹⁶ This lifelong stance towards God as humble recipients prepares and enables us to love our neighbour.¹⁷ We can listen to our neighbours as fellow image bearers and honour them, even where they may disagree with our core convictions and show hatred towards us. (Matt 5:44, Luke 10:27) By accepting the position of penitent sinner, we are empowered to dismiss our own need to control or 'win' the conversation with another human person. Simultaneous with this, we depend on God to grant us the wisdom to perceive truth as we listen, in particular by assessing all we hear by his Word. However, our sense of ourselves as people who have received truth, rather than generated it ourselves, enables us to listen hard and well, be slow to speak and slow to become angry. (James 1:19)

¹⁶ *Westminster Confession of Faith* XI.4

¹⁷ This is an outworking of a well-ordered love for God, as the only true ground for well-ordered love of our neighbour (Augustine in Christopher Watkin *Biblical Critical Theory* (Zondervan Academic: Grand Rapids, Michigan, 2022), p398

The impact of Jesus' listening

The example of Jesus himself encourages us to listen to people well.¹⁸ He demonstrated a knowledge of people beyond what could be obtained by listening. Yet, he chose to listen and respond to others' words and so treat them with dignity as image bearers even despite their need to be reconciled with God. This shows the way forward for us. Of course, Jesus' commitment to love his neighbour, so fulfilling the law of God whom he loved and served perfectly, is most fully seen in his death on the cross for our sins.¹⁹ This does not make his constant choices to love in more minor but still significant ways any less breathtaking. If we want to love in imitation of him, we need to follow his example of listening well.

How listening matters

The power of listening and of being loved in this way can sometimes be seen in the results. In our polarised society, one of the ways human beings will change is if they are asked, 'Why do you think this?' In those moments, where we are called to give an account of why we believe something we will sometimes change the intensity of our belief if we find the depth of our thinking on the issue or our evidence insufficient.²⁰ As Christians it would be no surprise to us to find that honouring people by listening to them well (and therefore loving them) might result in a strengthening of the relationship. As they treat us as 'strangers', we obey Christ and move towards them as 'neighbours'. (Luke 10:25-37) In order to both calm the situation and to invite a strengthening of the relationship, we can seek to build connections with them through simply listening to them properly.²¹

Listening to someone properly is a valid and good thing to do in and of itself. It can be an expression of our fear of God and desire to live humbly before him. It can demonstrate a

¹⁸ Conversation with Dr Russell (13/3/23)

¹⁹ *Westminster Confession of Faith* VIII.4

²⁰ [Why Facts Don't Change Our Minds | The New Yorker](#). (25/6/2023)

²¹ Conversation with Dr Russell (13/3/23)

commitment to the other person as an image bearer, whom we seek to dignify and love. Listening well does not deny that we have true things to say. It may shape how and whether we say these truths, as we ponder how to love this person before us with our words. Listening may even strengthen the relationship with the other person and enable conversation beyond a single volatile interchange.

This leads to the next question: If, having listened, we have the opportunity to speak in a fierce and difficult conversation, how might we think about doing that well? How might we be clear and manage ourselves well in those moments?

STUDY 3 DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. What is the difference between good and poor listening? How would you rate yourself as a listener? Can you listen to someone you fiercely disagree with?

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2. What biblical principles might help us to pay more attention to how we listen to our neighbours? Who do you struggle to listen to? Why is it so difficult?

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3. Read Luke 10:25-37. How does Jesus challenge our hearts with his words? How might you apply the principles here to learning to listen to others better?

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4. How does James 1:19 help us to understand some of the challenges we face as we struggle to listen better?

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4. STUDY FOUR

Faith in the Face of Fury

How do we react when we are faced with accusations and anger because we follow Jesus? What do we say? Most of us feel that we need to give a good account of ourselves as followers of Jesus in those moments. Yet we can easily feel ourselves inadequate for the task. We will finish this set of studies with some ideas about how to approach this practically.

How Ranting Works

First, it is helpful for us to understand something about the mechanics of anger. An angry rant will usually last for a maximum of 150 seconds, or 2 ½ minutes.²² After this, the person raging loses momentum and energy. It is pointless trying to interrupt, but it is in this lull after the storm that we might consider making a response. Dr Russell suggests using a summary of the facts they have said and the emotion they are expressing as a way of responding.²³ A sentence that begins, 'I'm seeing how passionate you are about... ' may help to slow the speaker down.²⁴ As we have seen previously, listening is a powerful way of dignifying the speaker and this begins the response by demonstrating genuine interest in them and their position.

Leaving is Not Always Losing

This strategy of listening carefully and reflectively might result in good, but it does not follow that we are always obliged to undertake this. There are times when we need to leave a volatile conversation. If we are unable to shield ourselves from a forceful person sufficiently to be 'safe enough' for any number of reasons, it is wise to walk away.²⁵ We will know to what

²² This study is indebted to Dr Carolyn Russell for her time and expertise and part of this section arises out of a conversation on 13th March, 2023.

²³ *ibid*

²⁴ *ibid*

²⁵ *ibid*

extent we can manage ourselves well in the face of anger and accusation from other conflict situations. This self-knowledge is helpful in gauging how well we might be able to patiently endure a difficult conversation without igniting ourselves or being crushed. Moving away from the conversation may be the best way to love this person carefully.

Our goal to love our neighbour well needs to be paramount. If this is clear in our heads, rather than a desire to 'win' the conversation or a sense of obligation that we must stay, it frees us to make an informed decision. If we decide to leave, it will help us thinking more clearly about how to do this and avoid being passive aggressive or unduly cowed. If we decide to stay, it will help us to commit to treating our furious neighbour with dignity. Either response, driven by love, shapes our part in the conversation and thereby shifts the dance of how these interactions are increasingly playing out in our society.

Responding to Angry Accusations

Second, accusations do not have to be countered. They can be used as a way of connecting by indicating a willingness to listen and to connect. For example, in response to the accusation of being a bigot, someone might respond: 'I really don't want to be bigoted so could you help me understand what you mean by 'bigot'?'²⁶ This creates space for the speaker to reflect on their words. It creates a context whereby they are lovingly being held accountable for accusations they have made, but in a way that has the potential to calm rather than inflame the emotional temperature of the conversation.

Speaking Well

Third, out of this willingness to treat the stranger as our neighbour and love her in practical ways may come a context to share our thoughts. It might be useful to ask for permission to

²⁶ ibid

share and if that is given to speak out of what you have learned of that person.²⁷ How has what you've heard helped you to understand this person and what might he most need to hear about Jesus? In our time and place, the space we are given to speak about Jesus is often limited to maybe two sentences. As you prayerfully craft these, think about what might provoke curiosity about the Lord Jesus. Instead of filling this person with information, try and enable her to shift her stance from angry opposition to a desire to know more. This would be a great service to her.

Of course, this person may be unable or unwilling to listen to anything we might have to say. We do not need to conclude that nothing has been accomplished. If we have honoured her by listening to her diligently this may be used by God to change how she sees herself. Even in non-Christian political discussion as we saw in a previous study, listening has been shown to lead to greater self-reflection. Further, in this situation, we have invested in this person and so have the opportunity to commit to prayer on her behalf as a way of continuing to love her and care for her eternal welfare.

Not Just a Conversation

Regardless of how well or poorly we consider ourselves to have handled the situation, it is important in the aftermath to view this primarily through a spiritual rather than a social lens. This furious person is not as autonomous and independent as he might think. He is in relationship with other human beings who also bear God's image and so this moment is important to him in his self-understanding, because that is how God has made human creatures. We know that God can change his heart.²⁸ This shifts our reflections away from our capacity to persuade or how charming and likeable we may or may not have managed to be in the interaction. Instead, we desire above all things that God himself might transform someone's heart with the glory of the knowledge of his own Son.

²⁷ *ibid*

²⁸ *Westminster Confession of Faith* VII.3

This theological framework enables us freedom as we consider how to practically respond to our angry person beyond the furious conversation. We can choose to pray for them regularly. We can find other non-spiritual ways to build a connection with them and demonstrate our commitment to them as a fellow human person in ways that might mean something to them. This might be something as simple as greeting them warmly. By committing this person to God, we can look expectantly to him to change their heart. This means we are not bound by viewing them as locked into anger, but can act towards them in ways that invite them to a better mind. This freedom may enable us to find non defensive ways of mentioning our relationship with Jesus in subsequent interactions.

It is likely as we follow Jesus further into our century that many more of our conversations will be fraught. We are more likely to be confronted more often by more anger at not just the church and Christians but at Christ himself. It is helpful to have a good sense of what it might look like to make the most of every opportunity, particularly as the space to speak may be contracted. We need to have realistic expectations of ourselves and our capacity so that we do not get distracted by ourselves when we have these opportunities. We also need to understand our time and place well so that we can speak well of our Saviour so that people can hear clearly. (Colossians 4:5) God uses us in our weakness but he does call on us to be thoughtful and wise. He gives us each other to enable us to grow in our understanding of how to live for Jesus, and so we should continue this conversation with each, as we encourage one another. (Hebrews 10:23-25)

STUDY 4 DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. When you think of someone attacking you for being Christian what kinds of things about this would you find difficult? How would you like to be praying about this?

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2. Read through Luke 22:39-23:46 (or part thereof). How does Jesus' example of suffering unjustly to please his Father in passages like Luke 22-23 help us to have ways of responding that honour God? What kind of person would you like to be in these kinds of conversations?

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3. What does it mean for you to get ready to share Christ in an increasing hostile environment? What one thing would you like to work on in the coming week?

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4. How does Hebrews 10:19-25 give us resources to live well for Jesus in a world that may be angry with us for following him? Which of these resources do you want to invest in more in your life? How might you do that?

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