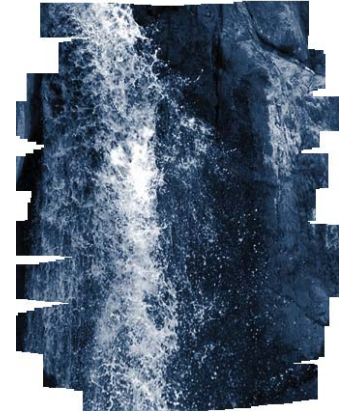


Thresholds of Conversion

JOHN 4:7-30, 39-40

A Samaritan woman came to draw water, and Jesus said to her, 'Give me a drink'. **8**(His disciples had gone to the city to buy food.) **9**The Samaritan woman said to him, 'How is it that you, a Jew, ask a drink of me, a woman of Samaria?' (Jews do not share things in common with Samaritans.) **10**Jesus answered her, 'If you knew the gift of God, and who it is that is saying to you, "Give me a drink", you would have asked him, and he would have given you living water.' **11**The woman said to him, 'Sir, you have no bucket, and the well is deep. Where do you get that living water? **12**Are you greater than our ancestor Jacob, who gave us the well, and with his sons and his flocks drank from it?' **13**Jesus said to her, 'Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, **14**but those who drink of the water that I will give them will never be thirsty. The water that I will give will become in them a spring of water gushing up to eternal life.' **15**The woman said to him, 'Sir, give me this water, so that I may never be thirsty or have to keep coming here to draw water.' **16** Jesus said to her, 'Go, call your husband, and come back.' **17**The woman answered him, 'I have no husband.' Jesus said to her, 'You are right in saying, "I have no husband"; **18**for you have had five husbands, and the one you have now is not your husband. What you have said is true!' **19**The woman said to him, 'Sir, I see that you are a prophet. **20**Our ancestors worshipped on this mountain, but you say that the place where people must worship is in Jerusalem.' **21**Jesus said to her, 'Woman, believe me, the hour is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. **22**You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews. **23**But the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father seeks such as these to worship him. **24**God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth.' **25**The woman said to him, 'I know that Messiah is coming' (who is called Christ). 'When he comes, he will proclaim all things to us.' **26**Jesus said to her, 'I am he, the one who is speaking to you.' **27** Just then his disciples came. They were astonished that he was speaking with a woman, but no one said, 'What do you want?' or, 'Why are you speaking with her?' **28**Then the woman left her water-jar and went back to the city. She said to the people, **29**'Come and see a man who told me everything I have ever done! He cannot be the Messiah, can he?' **30**They left the city and were on their way to him....

39 Many Samaritans from that city believed in him because of the woman's testimony, 'He told me everything I have ever done.' **40**So when the Samaritans came to him, they asked him to stay with them; and he stayed there for two days.



What do you notice about how Jesus leads this woman? What do you notice about her responsiveness?

Five Thresholds of Postmodern Conversion

Adapted from Doug Schaupp, IV Staff

1 From [] to trust. Non-believers often have valid personal reasons not to trust Christians, but they also might have preconceptions or prejudice against Christians from how they are portrayed in media or history.

- Does your friend trust Christians?
- Does he or she trust your motives in your efforts to become friends?
- What invitation could you make to your friend to build trust?

2 From complacent to [] Sometimes our friends are quite willing to talk, and to answer questions we might have for them, even on spiritual topics, but show no interest in reciprocating by asking questions, or listening to what we might think.

- Is your friend at all curious about Jesus? Or “spirituality”? Or your values?
- What can you do to elicit curiosity, to help your friend emerge from complacency?
- What invitation could you make to your friend to build curiosity?

3 From being [] in their life, to being open to change in their life. Interestingly this always seems to be the hardest threshold to cross. It is, of course, possible to be curious and to love asking questions about and talking about deep and spiritual things, but have no intention to change what seems like a pretty good, satisfying life.

- Is your friend aware of a need in his or her life that would require change to address?
- Have you seen your friend make other changes in his or her life?
- What could you do to help your friend to grow in openness to change?

4 From [] to seeking. Even when our friends become curious about Jesus and even open to change in their life, it didn’t necessarily follow that they began actively, purposefully seeking God. It is more natural for them to meander. They come to church or say yes to our invitations the way someone might go to the movies—“I’m free this week”—rather than “I’ll commit to purposeful inquiry by coming regularly.”

- Has your friend been willing to say yes to an invitation from you, then to follow through on that “yes”?
- Does your friend view himself or herself in a process of seeking?
- What invitation could you make to your friend to increase a desire purposefully to seek God?

5 From darkness to the [] Finally, each of our friends has one more threshold to cross. They need to cross the threshold of the kingdom itself. They needed to repent and believe and give their lives to Jesus. Many people who journey well along the path to faith, learning to trust a Christian, becoming curious about Jesus, becoming open to personal change, even seeking after answers... never become Christians.

- Have you a sense that your friend might be ready to be invited to become a Christian? What are clues that might indicate readiness?
- Would you be ready to invite your friends to become Christians? How would you put that invitation? What do they need to understand about the faith before they embrace it?

BREAKING TRUST

1. Defend yourself
2. Bruise them with strong words
3. Avoid them in fear
4. Judge for their behavior
5. Argue to prove you are right

BUILDING TRUST

1. Pray for them
2. Learn from them
3. Bond with them in love
4. Affirm them for their value
5. Welcome them into a deeper experience

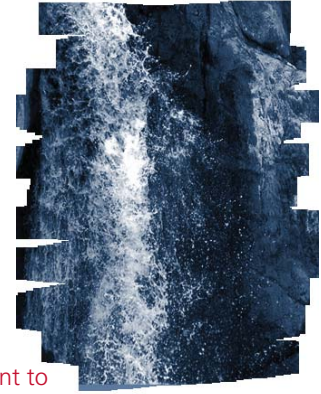
What can you do to build trust with your friends in a way to help them cross the next threshold of conversion?

Thresholds of Conversion

JOHN 4:7-30, 39-40

1. Distrust to trust (v9)

A Samaritan woman came to draw water, and Jesus said to her, 'Give me a drink'. 8(His disciples had gone to the city to buy food.) 9The Samaritan woman said to him, 'How is it that you, a Jew, ask a drink of me, a woman of Samaria?' (Jews do not share things in common with Samaritans.) 10Jesus answered her, 'If you knew the gift of God, and who it is that is saying to you, "Give me a drink", you would have asked him, and he would have given you living water.' 11The woman said to him, 'Sir, you have no bucket, and the well is deep. Where do you get that living water? 12Are you greater than our ancestor



2. Complacent to curious (v11)

Jacob, who gave us the well, and with his sons and his flocks drank from it?' 13Jesus said to her, 'Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, 14but those who drink of the water that I will give them will never be thirsty. The water that I will give will become in them a spring of water gushing up to eternal life.' 15The woman said to him, 'Sir, give me this water, so that I may never be thirsty or have to keep coming here to draw water.'

3. Open to change in her life (v15)

16 Jesus said to her, 'Go, call your husband, and come back.' 17The woman answered him, 'I have no husband.' Jesus said to her, 'You are right in saying, "I have no husband"; 18for you have had five husbands, and the one you have now is not your husband. What you have said is true!' 19The woman said to him, 'Sir, I see that you are a prophet. 20Our ancestors worshipped on this mountain, but you say that the place where people must worship is in Jerusalem.' 21Jesus said to her, 'Woman, believe me, the hour is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. 22You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews. 23But the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father seeks such as these to worship him. 24God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth.' 25The woman said to him, 'I know that Messiah is coming' (who is called Christ). 'When he comes, he will proclaim all things to us.' 26Jesus said to her, 'I am he, the one who is speaking to you.'

4. From meandering to seeking (vv16-26)



What do you notice about how Jesus leads this woman? What do you notice about her responsiveness?

Jesus makes provocative choices (to ask her for a drink, to tell her to go get her husband) to draw her in further to conversation and to point to deeper realities. He uses familiar images (living water, worship that depends on no particular mountain) but he is willing to make his identity an issue. She is intrigued, and her understanding/curiosity about his identity grows: "you, a Jew" ● "greater than our ancestor Jacob" ● "I see you are a prophet" ● reminds me of the Messiah ● "He cannot be the Messiah, can he?"

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5. From darkness to the Kingdom of Light (vv29-40)

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