In your mind, what makes for a “good” conversation? Think back on the last few conversations you’ve had. Are they memorable? If you’re like me, you probably have a particular set of conversational topics that dominate particular relationships. Sometimes you feel bound to talking about the same old things. You have longed for the conversation to make that jump – from the surface level stuff to somewhere with depth. Somewhere with real honest emotion coupled with truth. I’m talking about allowing the gospel to penetrate our often times guarded, small talk. This has as much to do with Christians talking to other Christians as it does with Christians speaking to non-Christians. The longer we delay the important stuff, the harder it can be to cut new paths of conversation later.

This may be harder for some, but spiritual conversations do not come naturally to anyone. In the same way, the gospel message does not come *naturally* to our hearts. The gospel says that we ourselves are not good enough on our own for God, and that truth is an affront to everyone’s pride. So the gospel message and the conversations that flow from it may certainly meet with resistance. But God is also working, and His Spirit can overcome such resistance (how do you think you were saved?). As mysterious as the wind, God may very well be already wearing down the spiritual resistance in the heart, priming certain individuals *for* such a conversation.

Actually, I guarantee He is doing that *if you have been praying for this person*. Also know that your words might be a part of that conditioning. Does the farmer look at the hardened, beat down soil that has been driven over constantly as incapable of anything good? Well, it’s still the same soil! And if it were conditioned right, the seed would take. I allude here to the parable of the sower and the soils which Jesus told in Matthew 13. The soil represents the human heart, and the reason that some places don’t receive the seed of the gospel is not because of the soil itself – it’s because of the present *condition* of the soil (i.e. the heart). Some hearts have been trampled. Some have a stranglehold on them. And some have no place for depth - there are some obstacles in the way of sustained growth.

But God is ploughing such hearts, and He wants us to be ready and willing to follow behind him with the seed. If you want spiritual conversations, then you need spiritual primer. That primer is prayer.

But how do you move into a spiritual conversation? What I find too often is that I overthink it. I make myself like the lead actor of a grand play, and the curtain is about to go up when the conversation turns to God! Will I remember my lines? Will I sound real? Believable? Such apprehensions are all too often the pressures that Satan would want us to feel. It leads us to false assurances: “well, this just isn’t my gift/calling/place.” Not true. God never said you must first master some art of conversation or Bible knowledge! What did Jesus ask you to do – just “follow Me!”

So first of all, relax, we’re not the lead actors! We’re not even on stage. Think of yourself as more of a stagehand. Feel better? Do you think you could handle pointing a spotlight? Yeah, I bet you could! Well, that’s more the reality. Jesus and His Word are center stage and they can handle themselves. They’ve handled critics of all kinds, and they’re still standing. You just need to point the light. Try something like this,

“*So I was reading or thinking about this verse the other day, have you ever heard this…*”(and you go on to share that verse with them, doesn’t have to be verbatim, but in your own words). Then be sure to add, “*And I realized…*” And at that point you personally apply it to yourself. It is very disarming to someone when you personally apply God to *your life*. There it is. You just did the “Big Talk” with small talk ease – it was as easy as breathing! *And* you’ve left them with something “big” to think about. We don’t want spiritual conversations to be the “one and done”: “Phew, now that’s over…”. No, we want them to be a normal part of our conversations. We are *spiritual* beings, and as Christians we’ve been given new lives *in the Spirit*. **The only thing *not normal* would be *not talking* about what is now the defining part of our lives!** Our conversations should always be reflecting this: both in *content* and by *how* we talk about everything else. So Paul, in Colossians 4:6 writes,

6*Let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how you ought to answer each person.*

So be the spot-lighter: don’t ignore the “big talk” spiritual things, just be ready through prayer – and spotlight it in a “small-talk” way (always be gracious, *seasoned with salt* – the expression suggest both being *tasteful*; it adds flavor to the discourse, and *wholesome*; it preserves from corruption). Perhaps now, more than before, you may find fertile soil in hearts that once were forsaken grounds.