

WHY SAMARITANS BELIEVED IN HIM—

“Because of His Own Word”

Jn 4:1-26, 39-42

I. PERSUASIVE, PROGRESSIVE REVELATION to the WOMAN at the WELL

(and, more broadly, bringing the Gospel to the Gentile world)

- A. “Give me a drink”—appealing to common humanity, breaking down barriers
 - 1. Defusing hostility—asking for help; reducing tension re Jewish-Samaritan history
 - 2. Developing illuminating analogy re water
 - a. Jacob’s well provides immediate illustration, historically important, providing essential
 - b. In OT water powerful symbol—and, for Christians, ultimately re the Holy Spirit & new birth
 - c. Jesus moves from physical need to spiritual hunger to eternal promise—“never thirst again”
 - 3. Evangelistic opportunities—beginning conversation with ordinary, essential items
 - a. Documented, widespread loneliness—suggest “friendship with God”?
 - b. Wanting worldview—suggest comprehensive cohesive Christian stance
- B. “Call your husband”—moving to convict woman of her spiritual needs
 - 1. Calling to attention her marital status—moral standards, if illuminated, elicit conviction
 - 2. Convincing her of his “prophetic” powers—knowing her history, challenging her status
 - a. Christian tradition: Jesus was Prophet, Priest, King—fulfilling OT
 - b. Though Samaritans disallowed OT prophets, the woman sees in Jesus a new Reality
 - c. As Prophet, Jesus: forth-tells, foretells, convicts, comforts . . .
 - 3. Evangelistic opportunities—confronting the lost with their sinfulness, inner poverty; challenging propriety, urging conversion & repentance—eliciting conviction (not blaming others)
 - a. Psychological perspectives—*Whatever Became of Sin?* reality of guilt & need of forgiveness
 - b. Historical record—Holocaust; Gulags; post-colonial Africa; Cuba; Nicaragua
 - c. Personal failures—adultery; dishonesty; pride; envy; sloth; anger; lust; avarice; intemperance
- C. “The hour is coming”—prophetic Word clarifying ultimate End (both consummation & purpose)
 - 1. Neither Gentiles nor Jews enjoyed God’s final revelation—only Incarnate/Resurrected Christ ultimately reveals Truth (“I am the way, the truth, and the life”)
 - 2. Ultimately, all must worship the Father God
 - a. In Spirit—neither idolatry (e.g. Hinduism) nor materialism (e.g. pantheism)
 - b. And in Truth—amidst widespread relativism (e.g. current Amazon conference, decrees)
 - 3. Evangelistic opportunities—clarifying, proclaim “now is the hour”
 - a. Witnessing to Muslims, Jews, et al.—possible? keys?
 - b. Standing for Truth—courageous commitment to “telling it as it is” rather than reciting various party lines (be it Marxist, Progressive, Modernist, et al.)
- D. “I who speak to you am He”—the promised Messiah had come
 - 1. Jewish expectations: half-truths corrected by the Incarnate Christ
 - 2. Gentile hungers—evident in Greco-Roman world; evident in tribal religions (e.g. Montezuma re Cortes); still evident in utopian fantasies and new age cults
 - 3. Evangelistic opportunities
 - a. Fulfilling deep human hunger for Messiah (cf. *Bruceko*) rather than finite, failing saviors (cf. *The God Who Failed* & Whittaker Chambers’ *Witness* re Communism)
 - b. Demonstrating how Jesus the Christ is, in fact, THE MESSIAH—apologetics’ value

II. LEADING MANY SAMARITANS to BELIEVE on HIM

- A. Initially: the woman’s witness—“He told me everything”
 - 1. Personal testimony powerful, without being necessarily precise theology
 - 2. Preaching Gospel central task of Church, clarifying doctrine, continuing to proclaim His Word
- B. Consequently: many Samaritans declared: “we ourselves have heard Him and we know that this is indeed the Christ, the Savior of the world;” still more: Christ continually speaks—drawing men to Himself as Savior and LORD

Gregory Koukl: *Tactics: A Game Plan for Discussing Your Christian Convictions*

“With the advantage of a lifetime of experience, Greg Koukl has written what must be considered THE authoritative treatment of how to employ various strategies in conversations with unbelievers about the Christian faith. *Tactics* is not just another apologetics book. It is a sensitive, well-written, widely illustrated treatment of actual situations that often come up when believers share their faith. Koukl not only reminds us that it is not enough to know why you believe, but it is also crucial to know how to communicate those beliefs by adapting to various situations. And *Tactics* shows precisely how to do that.” — J. P. Moreland

I’d like to suggest a “more excellent way.” Jesus said that when you find yourself as a sheep amidst wolves, be innocent, but shrewd (Matthew 10:16). Even though there is real warfare going on, our engagements should look more like diplomacy than D-Day. (p. 20)

These three skills — knowledge, an accurately informed mind; wisdom, an artful method; and character, an attractive manner — play a part in every effective involvement with a nonbeliever. The second skill, tactical wisdom, is the main focus of this book. (p. 25)

My goal, rather, is to find clever ways to exploit someone’s bad thinking for the purpose of guiding her to truth, yet remaining gracious and charitable at the same time. My aim is to manage, not manipulate; to control, not coerce; to finesse, not fight. I want the same for you. (p. 28).

Here’s the key principle: Without God’s work, nothing else works; but with God’s work, many things work. Under the influence of the Holy Spirit, love persuades. By the power of God, the gospel transforms. And with Jesus at work, arguments convince. [p. 36]

It may surprise you to hear this, but I never set out to convert anyone. My aim is never to win someone to Christ. I have a more modest goal, one you might consider adopting as your own. All I want to do is put a stone in someone’s shoe. I want to give him something worth thinking about, something he can’t ignore because it continues to poke at him in a good way. [p. 38]

It might be called the “queen mother” of all tactics because it’s so flexible and adaptable. It’s easily combined with other moves you will learn later. It’s the simplest tactic imaginable to stop a challenger in her tracks, turn the tables, and get her thinking, a virtually effortlessly way of putting you in the driver’s seat of the conversation. It’s simply called “Columbo.” [p. 46]

The key to the Columbo tactic is to go on the offensive in an inoffensive way by using carefully selected questions to productively advance the conversation. Simply put, never make a statement, at least at first, when a question will do the job. [p. 47]

It might have occurred to you that Jesus used this method frequently. [p. 49]

“WHAT DO YOU MEAN BY THAT?” When Lieutenant Columbo shows up at a crime scene, the first thing he does is gather facts. In the same way, sometimes you’ll need more information before you can proceed in a conversation. Your initial probe, then, will be open-ended: “What do you mean by that?” [p. 50]

“HOW DID YOU COME TO THAT CONCLUSION?” Our second Columbo question, “Now, how did you come to that conclusion?” is designed to enforce the burden-of-proof rule. [p. 61]

There are a handful of ways that this third use of Columbo can work. Generally, your leading questions will be used to inform, persuade, set up the terms, or refute. [p. 73]

You can cushion your third use [asking leading questions] of Columbo a couple of ways. For one, think about using the phrase “Have you considered” to introduce your concern, then offering a different view that gently questions the person’s beliefs or confronts a weakness with his argument. [p. 84]

There are two basic executions of the Columbo tactic. The first is the bumbling approach of Lieutenant Columbo himself — halting, head-scratching, and apparently harmless. . . . The second is more confrontational and aggressive. It’s the technique a lawyer uses in a courtroom. [p. 99]