



## 5. How to say nothing – unless you really say something

Discussion guide – Series III

### HOOK:

- Can anyone remember a time when an important conversation was happening - and you said way too *much*?
- Can anyone remember a time when an important conversation was happening - and you said way too *little*?

**Comment regarding the video:** We are often wise to investigate *why* people say things before speaking, because much can sit behind a question or comment.

### BOOK: Read Mark 10:17-22 - The Rich young man and Jesus

- Jesus actually was truly and fully good. So, why do you think he asked, 'Why do you call me good?' instead of answering the question?
- Why do you think Jesus went on to list the various commands when he already knew there was no way this man could have kept every one of them?
- Do you think the rich man's claim that he'd kept all of these commands was true?
- How do you feel about Jesus' final instruction to this man in verse 21? The disciples seemed to feel it was a bit harsh. Do you?
- What motive did Jesus have in his heart when he gave the man this very awkward and difficult instruction? (It's stated in verse 21).
- How was the way Jesus engaged this conversation wise?\*

### LOOK:

- Did any examples from the video today stand out to you as a good way to redirect a conversation?
- **Activity – identifying the question behind the question:** Go through your list of 'toxic topics' again and consider afresh:
  - (a) What might the question behind the question be?
  - (b) What question could we ask to draw this out?
  - (c) What question could we potentially ask to avoid answering their question if we sensed a hostile motive?



**TOOK: Questions to summarise the series:**

- How did Jesus respond differently to those who were interested, disinterested or hostile toward him?
- How did Jesus avoid giving 'quotable quotes' to some people, and why?
- How did Jesus avoid giving 'quotable quotes' when trying to teach the crowds due to the varying motives of people present – while also still saying something useful?
- While Jesus was deliberately quiet on some topics, what topics was he deliberately vocal about?
- On what basis did he decide what he would or would not say?
- What have you got out of this series?

*"I am sending you out like sheep among wolves. Therefore, be as shrewd as snakes and as innocent as doves."*  
Matthew 10:16

**Conclude with a time of prayer**

- ...for the nation as a whole
- ...for the Government
- ...for key people in public media
- ... for the people of your own city and community
- ...for the Principal and teachers of your schools
- ...and for each other as witnesses to them all!

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\* Note that Jesus may not have explained that salvation was a gift from God, received through faith, because (a) he was still on the way to the cross himself to pay for our sin and (b) had foreknowledge from God that this man would later become aware of his own death and resurrection, and then truly surrender his life to God.

**A summary statement for the series:** To impact people's lives we need to address the questions and needs of their hearts. A person's first words don't always reveal this. In fact, first words are often a 'smokescreen'. While it is encouraging that some are interested in seeking spiritual truth, others will be disinterested, and some hostile, and for a wide range of reasons. This is why Jesus consistently asked questions – to uncover the motives of people's hearts. He told intriguing stories for the same reason – to sift his audiences. Only then did he respond, because only then could he discern their motives, and how he could best encourage their faith.