



Coach Approach Ministries Podcast

Episode 52: Faith Conversations

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[Intro Music]

Brian Miller: Welcome to the Coach Approach Ministries Podcast, where we help people find their way with God by training the best Christian coaches in the world. Our podcast today is sponsored by our certificate in Christian Leadership Coaching. This is a nine-month, ICF-approved coach training program that will prepare you to coach those around you, to set goals, take action, and reach new levels of success. We have a cohort forming in July, so if you're interested, go to our website at www.coachapproachministries.org/coachnow. I'm Brian Miller, Strategic Director for Coach Approach Ministries, CAM for short, and I want to share a conversation I had with Bill Copper and Chad Hall about faith conversations. This was originally from a podcast series we called, "Q and A Podcast," and it was only made available to our Community of Coaches Membership, but today we want to make this helpful podcast available to you. We hope you enjoy it.

Hey, this is Brian Miller with Chad Hall and Bill Copper. We're the leadership team for Coach Approach Ministries, and recording another copy of questions and answers, questions and responses, really. We want to respond to some questions. This month is March 2016, and we've made a challenge for faith coaching, for having faith conversations, at least four this month, and so we want to spend some time unpacking that so you get a feel for what that's going to look like in your own life. Guys, let me just dive right in and ask you this question, "What is a faith conversation?" How can someone know they're having a one?

Bill Copper: Yeah, Brian, thanks. We used to think, and I used to think that faith conversations had to be those in which we talked about the Bible, or Jesus, or overtly somebody's journey towards saving. What I came to realize, and this really changed, I think, out for me when Chad and I at our and our colleagues were working on the book, that most of our conversations can be faith conversations, even when they're not overt, direct, using faith language, using themes, or anything that seems to be directly connected with faith, it can all be faith conversations. We are people of faith, and our overarching goal is that people grow closer to God, and we think those can happen any of the conversations we have with

people.

Chad Hall: Yeah, the way I think about it, Brian, is that a faith conversation is a conversation that helps someone navigate life faithfully, align their life more fully with God's intent, and to live a life that really is marked by flourishing, especially the flourishing that God longs for us to have, and provides for us. So, example of a faith conversation, heard one just last night. We have this group mentor coaching cohort that meets. Great conversation, not to steal too much confidentiality here, but last evening the conversation was about being present, and being fully present, and not letting the day happen to you, but being intentional, and it was really neat how the coaching conversation just unfolded into faith issues of putting the iPhone away, and being present with the people who are actually in the room. Even being present with God, and noticing where God was at work, and so the client didn't come in saying, "Hey, I want to have a faith conversation," the client came in with a topic, and of course God touches all aspects of our lives, and the coach was really sensitive and the client was sensitive too, how was God touching that particular issue in the client's life, and so that's a faith conversation.

Brian: Yeah, I saw a great one yesterday, too. The topic was what role to play in certain situations, and the interesting thing was God was very much brought into the conversation, not forced at all, just very natural, He came into the conversation, and you could see, at one point, the client just their whole emotions about this issue just lifted up and levitated, if you will, and hovered over to a new place, and then came back down, and it was just an immense amount of relief, of understanding. This may sound strange to say, it was one of the more beautiful coaching I've ever seen. So, let me... Go ahead, go ahead.

Chad: Well, I was just going to say I think that's one of the things that distinguishes Christian coaching. As Christian coaches, we are open to that kind of beauty, and resource, even, in our conversations, and we accept that sometimes just make space for it.

Brian: Yeah, well, we assume, as Christian coaches, that people have innate strengths, and maybe every coach does, we assume they were given to us on purpose. So, let me ask you guys this, because a part of the challenge is not just to have faith coaching conversations. Part of the challenge is to ask God to nudge you at least four times during the month. To say, "Hey, this is your chance. This is it, this is the one I want you to do." Whether it's at Walmart, in the line, if it's at home with family, or wherever it is, how are people supposed to know, and I'm sure it's unique to individuals, but what are some ways people can know they got nudged?

Chad: I would tend to think God is always nudging you. The nudge probably isn't, "Hey, here's your chance, do it now." The nudge is probably a reminder, and so the nudge is more about God giving us eyes to see, ears to hear what is happening right in front of us, and that this conversation, just like pretty much every other conversation, is an opportunity to have a faith conversation, or a conversation results in someone having a movement in their faith, and so, I would say the nudge is not only God helping us see, "Oh yeah, this is an opportunity," but also God nudging us to say, "And remember, use that coaching thing that I've been teaching you." That's the real kind of trick, I think, with Coach Approach, to think conversations, so many of us, when we are reminded, "Oh, this is opportunity for a

faith conversation.” Boy, we’re so tempted to go into one of the delivery, the teaching, the forcing the issue, versus the coaching approach, which is to invite, and be curious, and ask questions, and draw out, and leave the results to God.

Bill: Yeah, I tend to think of the principle being similar to what Henry Blackaby teaches about experiencing God, and that is that God’s at work all the time, and so there are always opportunities for us to share in a faith conversation, so let’s just be looking for it. Let’s be curious about it, let’s be assuming that when I’m standing in line that the next conversation I have could well be open up to having some kind of faith conversation. Let’s assume that in my every day conversations with people that I’m connected with that the topic of faith could come up, or seem to come up, certainly in our formal coachings be listening for those opportunities. As Chad said, not because God just holds back, and just once in a while gives an opportunity and says, “There it is,” but rather, God’s always at work, and let’s just be looking for those opportunities to share those kind of things

Brian: Yeah, and I would encourage everybody to start their day with a little prayer to God saying, “Hey, I’m ready. I’m going to trying to be paying attention,” so sometimes those nudges are gentle and sometimes they’re a shove.

Bill: Yeah, and sometimes we’re reluctant to say that prayer because of what we think it’s going to involve. That it’s this big thing, as opposed to realizing that those faith conversations, they come in all shapes, sizes, flavors, and sometimes those conversations are just a phrase, or a brief 30-second interchange with someone. Other times, those faith conversations are just part of our everyday connection with people, people we’re connected with all the time, and we see our topic come up, we hear something in someone’s voice, and we respond in a way that just invites that conversation, and maybe other times it’s a bit more formal, but we ought not assume that the only time we’re having faith conversations are when they’re those drawn out, formal, “We’ve got to lead someone to something,” our faith conversations can happen in all kinds of ways.

Brian: Chad, what would you add to that?

Chad: Yeah, I would add that they happen in all kinds of ways, and they often start with the simple questions that we ask every day, in every way. We ask people, “How are you doing?” And they say, “Doing good,” and then, we typically respond with, “Good,” and then we move on. A coach approach to that conversation, one that might invite faith movement, would be, “Hey what’s been going good?” And it just invites a deeper conversation, and I think that really is the key to a faith conversation, it’s a deeper conversation then we might otherwise just sort of gloss over, or keep on the surface, and what we’re doing in these faith conversations, is we’re going as deep, and as purposeful as the other person allows, and what we don’t want to do with a coach approach to a conversation is force someone to have a coaching conversation. That wouldn’t be very much a coach approach, but just to be curious, and to ask questions, and get the person maybe reflecting, and sometimes they’re going to simply end up with, “Yeah, it’s been a good day, I’m thankful for it.”

I’d say that’s in some ways a faith conversation. The conversation might eventually go deep enough to say, “And there are some things that aren’t going well,” and that is deep. I just had a conversation with

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someone yesterday and they shared that their mother had passed away, and rather than rush in with condolences, I just said, “Well, how are you doing with that?” We began to unfold, and the person’s able to share that there had been a real sense of celebration in his mother’s life, and again coaching is active listening, reflecting back what you’ve heard, and so rather than give condolences, I simply said, “Congratulations that you had a mother whose life was worth celebrating,” and he said, “You know, you’re the first person whose congratulated me.” That was his language, his way of experiencing it the way he’d described it, and it just really seemed to make a difference for him. Again, I just reflected back what I was hearing as I coached, or in a coach approach way, and to me that’s a faith conversation. It helped him really hold on to something dear, and meaningful, and important, and I won’t get into all the details, but it really seemed to be a faith movement for him.

Brian: It came out of the listening, that was the key for me. It wasn’t that you just have decided that every time you go through a funeral visitation line you’ll say, “Congratulations! That’s the new thing we say.”

Chad: “You won the lottery!”

Brian: “Yeah, hey, that’s great, that’s good.”

Bill: And in Chad’s example, sometimes you get feedback, and immediately it shows, “Wow, this is meaningful to me.” The other person gives us feedback that gives us some response to it. Other times, our faith conversations, we don’t necessarily get to see the results of them. We have a conversation, we believe that that brief conversation, and what happens in the life of the other person happens after we’re gone. We don’t necessarily get to experience it, and I would just say that’s not a reason for us not to do things, all said, some plants, some water, some are there for the harvest, and our role is just to be there for that step, whatever that step is. Down here in Florida, our local grocery store is called Publix, man, they are just a cut above, and they always have great people in them, their stores are always spotless, everybody’s always smiling and cheerful, and I was in line, a week ago Saturday it was, and there was a young man who was checking my groceries, and he was just having a great time, and I said something like, “You seem to really be enjoying yourself,” and he said, “Well, I don’t normally run the cashier, I usually stock groceries, but I’m learning how to do this, and I like it better,” and I said, “It’s always helpful to find something that you’re really good at and love to do,” and he said, “Well, if I could just figure out what I’m good at.” I said, “Well, that might be worth figuring out.”

He just stood there. He handed me my receipt, I went on out, and I didn’t get a response from that, I didn’t get to see big lightbulbs go off, but I believe that there was a seed that was planted there, and I believe that was a faith conversation because it just got him thinking about, “What am I made to do? What am I wired to do?” Even though we didn’t get to any, “Jesus language,” or, “God created me in a certain way,” language. It most certainly got him thinking along those lines, and those could be faith conversations as well, even though we don’t necessarily get to see that.

Brian: Wow, that’s good. Hey, this is a good challenge for folks, I think we’re going to tie it up right there, and just see what the learning is, and we really invite our coaching community to feedback and let us know what they’re learning as they respond to God’s nudges to have faith conversations, and how

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they can best use a coach approach, and maybe even what doesn't work, what we have to be really careful of as a coach approach with faith coaching, and what a great opportunity for us to learn, to spread the faith, and to spread the kingdom of God, and the awareness of God. I'm looking forward to this. Thanks guys so much for joining me on this Q and A podcast.

Chad: Thanks, Brian.

Bill: Good to be with you, Brian.

Brian: Thank you so much for joining us. Next week, Chad and I will continue our discussion about his new eBook, *Nine Things It Really Takes to Be a Great Coach*. We will focus on the fact that one thing a coach really needs is clients. If you don't want to miss any of our podcasts, I'd invite you to subscribe to our podcasts at iTunes or at Google Play. This podcast was sponsored by our certificate in Christian leadership coaching. This is a nine month, ICF-approved coach training program that will prepare you to coach those around you, to set goals, take action, and reach new levels of success. We have a cohort forming in July, and we would love to have you be a part of that, so if you're interested, go to our website at www.coachapproachministries.org/coachnow. We'll see you next week.

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