

Opening up on open-mic night

July 3, 2010

My teammates and I went a popular coffee shop in Old Town, the downtown shopping area of Fort Collins. Like every Friday night, it was “open-mic night,” in which customers could sing or play an instrument on stage. Strategically placed over a hookah bar, the coffee shop has a really social, collegiate atmosphere, which we decided would be a perfect opportunity to meet the exact group of people we had been trying to reach.

As Mike, Jarred and Clara bought some coffee, I sought out a booth near the stage that seemed a prime location to start conversation with people who would be sitting around us. We knew we had come to the right place when after five minutes of Mike strumming his guitar, we were engaged in dialogue with several people. I noticed a chance to start conversation with a girl sitting in a booth next to ours. I had been trying to build a quality friendship the past three weeks and quite honestly seemed to have not gotten very far with anyone. Not expecting much, yet not wanting to let another opportunity slip by me, I turned with a smile and opened with the oh-so-cliché, “Do you guys come here a lot?”

While this was not the most creative icebreaker, it did not matter as the conversation quickly began to flow, and the young woman began to open up to me. We connected about the music being played, the Fort Collins area, her recent loss of her grandma and some of the hardships she has been experiencing since she returned from living in a group home the last three years of her life. I complimented the really beautiful yet simple cross necklace she was wearing and asked her if the cross meant anything to her or if she just liked the necklace. She replied, “Thanks, yeah, I wear it because I am a Christian.” A small part of me sank, I love Christians but I wanted to befriend someone who needed to hear about Christ. However, as we talked I found that what the label “Christian” meant to her was very

different of what it means to me.

She knows all about God and believes he exists and she thinks that is enough. There is one huge problem —it totally leaves out the need for a relationship with Christ. My new friend had been through it all, and I was amazed at how quickly she opened up to me. She was desperate for someone to care enough to listen. Through simply filling that need of being a listener, God opened up the doors for a friendship to begin.

She and I have talked a lot since then, and continued trials have occurred in her life that she has come to me about. I kept stressing the importance of prayer. She now has prayed for her first time and also realized that God is not putting her through all of her heartache, but he is allowing it to happen so that she can realize that she needs to accept him.

As I continue to invest in her life, God is persistently working in both my new friend's life and my own as another beautiful expansion of his kingdom. I know that even if my new friend is the only person I get the opportunity to pour into this summer, that it was more than worth it. Just one life, but with such a bigger picture in mind!

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