

## How Do I Climb out of the Friendship Trench?

You've spent a considerable amount of time building a strong relationship with non-believing neighbors, co-workers, maybe even refugees. But rather than being overt and open about your faith in Jesus from the beginning, you have made the choice to say nothing or very little about the Lord. Now, realizing that a "silent testimony" of conduct falls far short of communicating the content of the Gospel, you feel that you need to be open about what you believe and about why you sought to establish the relationship in the first place. However, there is a problem. Since the relationship already exists "without" Jesus, how do you fit Him in? This workshop will explore:

- Why we dig the friendship trench
- How we can climb out
- What it means to our testimony if we choose to stay in

**Avi Snyder** serves as the European Director of Jews for Jesus, an international mission agency dedicated to proclaiming the gospel to the Jewish people in a direct and loving manner. Avi was raised in a Jewish home in New York and came to a saving faith in Jesus in 1977 with the help of a Jews for Jesus tract and the forthright witness of Christian friends. He graduated from Fuller Theological Seminary, the School of World Mission, with a master's degree in missiology. Avi has served with Jews for Jesus since 1978 and has provided leadership for the ministry in Los Angeles, New York, and London, as well as establishing the work in the former Soviet Union where he lived for seven years. He and his wife Ruth currently live in Budapest, Hungary.

### Introduction:

- The dilemma
  - For the sake of establishing a relationship or offering aid, the choice was made to omit an open, forthright testimony about the Lord
  - Now that Jesus has been left out of the relationship, how do you get Him back in?
- The challenge (the questions we must ask):
  - What's my basis biblical responsibility?
  - How do we fall into the trench?
  - How do we climb out?
  - What responsibility do we bear if I chose to stay in?

### Myths

- Myth #1 – "I have to establish a friendship/relationship with the person before I can share my faith"
- Myth #2 – "Friendship, love and a Christian lifestyle are sufficient testimonies – love in action speaks louder than words"

### Primary fears

- The Fear of Rejection – Ex. 3:10-12 cf. Ps. 27:10; 2 Cor. 2:15-16; Rom. 15:7

- The Fear of Inadequacy – Ex. 4:1
- The Fear of Disappointing / Failing to Measure Up

### **How do we fall into the trench?**

### **How do we climb out?**

- Dismiss the fears -- Isaiah 41:10; 2 Tim. 1:7
- Remember our basic biblical responsibility – Ezekiel 2:5, 7; Acts 1:8
- Believe the truth – Isiah 55:10-11; Heb. 4:12

### **Steps on the ladder of climbing out (not all steps are in consecutive order)**

- Step 1: A.R.R.A.R
  - Acknowledge 2 Sam 12:13; Isaiah 6:5; 1 John 1:8
  - Repent of the error/sin -- Psalm 32:5; Isaiah 6:7; 1 John 1:9
  - Resolve to “turn around” -- Isaiah 12:4
  - Ask the Lord for restoration and renewed opportunities -- Psalm 51:12-13, 15
  - Respond to the opportunities that He *will* provide (the God of innumerable “second” chances)
- Step 2: Initiate -- Ask questions
- Step 3: Inform
- Step 4: Always be ready to share a word of personal testimony
- Step 5: Respond to questions from the Scriptures

- Step 6: Offer to pray
- Step 7: Invite
- Step 8: Introduce and Expand their circle of Christian acquaintances
- Step 9: Stop – Take frequent pauses *all along the way*
- Step 10: Ask for a response

**Four ever-present dangers:**

- The danger of “deception”
- The danger of self-delusion – cf. Prov. 24:11-12; Ez. 33:7-8
- The danger of self-condemnation – cf. Ps. 32:3-4
- The danger of dread of losing the friendship

**What if:**

- What if you lose the friendship? -- That *will happen*, sometimes – cf. Matt. 10:34-36; John 15:18-21
- What if they reject you? -- They’re not rejecting you; they’re rejecting Yeshua – cf. 1 Sam. 8:7
- What if you cause them to reject the Lord? – You can’t

**Final thoughts on Biblical friendship**

- Prov. 27:6
- James 2:23

- John 15:14-15
  
- Our ultimate goals:
  - To be biblical friends
  
  - To see our friends become the friends of God

**Discussion questions:**

- How and when have you dug yourself into the Jesus-less friendship trench?
- How have you climbed out?

**For further reading:**

*Jews Don't Need Jesus – and Other Misconceptions*, Avi Snyder, Moody Press, 2017

*Bringing the Gospel Home*, Randy Newman, Crossway, 2011

*Neither Silent Nor Ashamed*, Avi Snyder, pre-publication

Contact:

Avi Snyder

[avi.snyder@jewsforjesus.org](mailto:avi.snyder@jewsforjesus.org)

+36 20 40 33 680

[www.jewsforjesus.org](http://www.jewsforjesus.org); [www.judenfuerjesus.org](http://www.judenfuerjesus.org); [www.zsidokjezuser.hu](http://www.zsidokjezuser.hu)