

007 Personal Attentiveness: Where Evangelism and Discipleship Meet

Welcome to the Apprentice Approach Podcast Episode 7, where the ripples far exceed the splash... this is your host Jack McQueeney.

Many Christians struggle with making disciples, they feel busy, overwhelmed, and not qualified. We understand this struggle, which is why we've created a Bible-based framework so any believer can master the art of discipling.

Today we will be speaking with Scott Morton, the International Funding Coach for The Navigators. For fourteen years, he led Navigator campus and marketplace ministries, in which he worked with students, business people, and missionaries, both stateside and overseas. For 12 years, he served as Vice President of The Navigators' US Development Ministry. Scott is a published author of three books, including [Down-to-Earth Discipling](#) which is on our [The Apprentice Approach Necessary Bookshelf](#) list. All of this experience has given Scott a passion for walking alongside people as they grow in their spiritual journeys. Scott is a long-time friend of mine and I'm happy to share our conversation with you! So without further delay, let's jump in!

Jack: Scott, thank you for taking the time being with us and I've always been intrigued by not only your full-time job, but also your personal ministry that you've had. You've always talked about/modeled a personal ministry, besides having this full-time job; how did you get started with that, Scott?

Scott: Well thank you, Jack. Sometimes by accident. A lot of believers today really want to have a personal ministry, they like to reach people with the Gospel and disciple them, but

they run out of time. I get it, I get it. So, I think the first thing I would suggest is two words and the words are: personal attentiveness. Personal attentiveness. Now, this seems like a simple thing, and it is, but let me tell you a story.

Back in 1855 there was a Sunday School teacher in Boston and this guy was an introvert, but he taught a class of young single men. He had it on his heart to go and see each of them personally because even though they'd been to Church and been in the class he wanted to personally talk to them about where they stood with the Lord. So, one day he describes going down to Holton's Shoe Store in Boston to go see this one guy in his Sunday school class. And he was so nervous, he walked right past Holton's Shoe Store and then collected himself and said, "Well I may as well get it over with." And he charged in, found the young clerk in the back wrapping up shoes, putting them on shelves. And he approached the young man and wanted to talk to him about his personal relationship with Christ and he said, afterward, it was quite a weak plea. He couldn't even remember the exact words he'd used, but this young man listened to him and he was worried that other shoe salesman and other customers might see them in the back of the room, but anyway this young guy accepted Christ that very day. Now, the man's name, the Sunday school teacher's name, was Edward Kimball, and we've never heard of him, we don't know him, but we do know the young shoe salesman that he talked to: Dwight L. Moody. Now, Dwight L. Moody then was instrumental in a guy named Chapman coming to Christ, Wilbert Chapman led Billy Sunday to Christ in one of his Crusades, Billy Sunday led Mordecai Ham to Christ in one of his crusades, and Mordecai Ham, the evangelist, spoke when Billy Graham accepted Christ. So, we know some of those names, but we don't know the name Edward Kimball, the introvert. Edward Kimball's my hero; we need more Edward Kimballs – people who will take time to personally be attentive to just that one person and talk to them about their relationship with Christ. So I think the

first thing, Jack, is personal attentiveness. So think of your world: in your business, you've got vendors that come in and out, you've got fellow colleagues that you're working with, family members, some distant and some close, but give them some personal attentiveness. Take time to listen to them, talk to them, now that means that you gotta stop talking and you gotta listen and ask questions. The other thing I do, then, and I wish I could say I was better at this Jack, but I've got my daily journal here, and by the way I think it's good to keep a journal. You don't need to write in it every day, but just write in it every now and then. But I have, on the second page, these friends- my neighbors, so I've got some guys down here and I put their wives names down as well, and these are people that I try to pray for every day; I just bring them before the Lord. I say, Lord, touch their lives, because the old saying is true, we have to talk to God about people before we talk to people about God. So, let's get them on our prayer lists and let's start praying for them as often as we can. So, personal attentiveness leads to putting these names down in our journal and that includes family as well.

Jack: Well, in light of the personal attentiveness, in this day and age that is really unique; you don't really see it that often.

Scott: No, people are in a hurry.

Jack: What are some ways that we can actually do that practically, Scott?

Scott: Well, for example, a vendor comes into your business; he comes in every month and delivers stuff. Instead of just hurrying him off and getting his invoice and letting it go, just take him aside and say, "By the way, how you doing? I don't know you very well. Tell me how long you been in this business? Tell me about your family." People are busy, but they've got time, if someone is seriously interested in them. The best conversations in the world, so the old saying goes,

“is someone who lets me talk about me.” So engage them. Sooner or later that will lead to you say, “Hey, why don’t we grab lunch together? It’s almost time for lunch.” So, I think just taking time to be interested and to talk. If you have in the back of your mind, you’ve gotta spring the Gospel on them in the first twenty minutes, then it’s not going to work. And they’ll smell it out anyway. Just be their friend.

Jack: Always be prepared with good questions. That’s good, Scott. Well, a lot of our friends, listeners, and friends/believers, you know it’s scary to think about evangelism and about talking to someone about spiritual things. How would one get started with that?

Scott: Well, I’m scared too, Jack. I get sweaty palms every time I say, “Hey let’s go out to lunch.” But a lot of people are like the Yukon river in Alaska- frozen at the mouth. We don’t know what to say, but let’s take the emphasis off: “What do I have to say?” To my heart: “I care about this person.” And, that’s extrovert or introvert. So, what does evangelism look like for an ordinary believer today? Well, I think we have to realize first of all that evangelism is a process, not an event, and I like imagining if you think of the diagram of a link and a chain. So, we’ve got all these chain links together; so you put down a link in a chain. Maybe someone hears a Billy Graham re-run on television- that’s a link; maybe his grandmother mentions that she’d like to take him to church- that’s a link; maybe he sees something in a friend that he just likes and wonders what church they attend- that’s a link; and so, all these links add up and then at the end of maybe 10 or 12 links, put a Cross- he comes to Christ. And then the links start over again on growing in Christ. So, I really believe that the emphasis on evangelism, we can overcome our fear of it, if we think: I’m a link in a chain. Now, 1 Corinthians 3:6-7 Paul says, “I planted, Apollos watered, God gave the increase.” So, Jack, if we think of ourselves as links in a chain... I’m going to touch a life today

with something- that adds up. So the vendor guy, you just took 5 minutes to talk to him, ask how long he's been, or about his family- that's a link in a chain. Because the Good News of Christ oozes out of us; there's a smell that Christians have, according to 2 Corinthians 2, that says this smell penetrates. And, you don't even have to be having a good day and this smell still goes out- the smell of Christ.

Jack: Yeah, that's good. We don't need to dump the truck but we can share a fresh word, an encouraging word, ask good questions.

Scott: And it doesn't even have to be about spiritual things. Just taking a genuine interest, and sometimes if a person is hurting you can say, "You know, I'm gonna pray for you; I'm gonna pray for you on that, thanks for telling me that."

Jack: What are some good ways to start a spiritual conversation with a friend?

Scott: You know, I'm not very sophisticated about it, Jack. So after I've started getting acquainted with someone, I'll just say, "By the way, you told me all about your business life and your family, may I ask, what's your spiritual background, were you raised in a church?" Or just, "Tell me about that." And I find people are not unwilling to talk about it if they feel safe; if they feel like they are going to get jumped on, then they won't say anything. You could then at that point say, "Well let me tell you, I can identify with something you had in your background, let me tell you about mine." Now, this is not the time for a 60-minute Gospel presentation. This is just maybe a 3-5 minute talk about your spiritual journey. Now, I've made the mistake, Jack, of coming on too strong too fast. And, there was one guy I gave a tour of Glen Eyrie here and I dumped the whole truck on him and when I called him again, he never returned my calls after 6 or 7 tries. I was too fast. I've also been too slow. I'd wait 4 or 5 years before I even identify as a Christian. So there's no formula for how to do

this, but I think the best thing is just say, "Tell me, what's your spiritual background?"

Jack: Well, it is interesting, as we take an interest in others, what God does in the midst of that, and as we pray and ask God to bless our time, it sure seems like others are really drawn to that because no one else is asking questions like that, that's for sure.

Scott: That's for sure.

Jack: And it seems like people are spiritually interested.

Scott: But, we have to do more than talk about God. I was on a Skype yesterday with one of our staff members across the world. I said, "How's so-and-so doing?" and he said, "Well he's doing fine on his fundraising." But I said, "Well, how's his ministry?" "Well..." "Does anybody come to Christ?" "Well, not really, but he talks about God a lot." So, just talking about God, or being "spiritual" is not going to do it. We have to ask the question sooner or later about Christ. (Jack: Right.) Paul said in 1 Corinthians, "We preach Christ and him crucified," and there's the danger. So, I find after I ask about a person's spiritual background, and if they seem interested and they like to talk about it, maybe the next time we get together I might say, "You know one of the things I like to do is to read the Bible with business guys and just learn about Christ; I need to know more about Christ, I sense from what you've said you'd like to know more about Christ. Let's do it together. Every couple weeks maybe we could get together for breakfast and just read about Jesus, a chapter. And that is a risk, and that's sweaty palms time Jack, because at that point they could say, "Are you kidding me?" and that's it. But, most of the time I've done that, people have taken me up on that; but it's a scary question to ask.

Jack: Yeah. What are you learning Scott, as it relates to moving from evangelism and connecting that, as you introduced

your friends to Christ, moving them along into discipleship? Because we'd like to see some of that happen very naturally, the relationship continues. What are you learning about connecting and continuing this relationship on?

Scott: Well, again, I don't think there's a formula there, because if your friendship is becoming genuine in the early days, even from that first meeting on, then continuing on is a no-brainer. Of course, we continue on, because we've enjoyed a friendship. Now, I'm not talking they have to be your best friend, but just someone you enjoy and they seem to enjoy you, so you just continue on. So, you're talking about Christ, they might come to Christ and they might not, but you just plan on continuing.

Jack, there's a couple things that might be helpful here as to what are some things we need to watch for in connecting with non-believers. Now, sometimes we make the mistake of thinking that because it's one-on-one, that I've only got one person that I'm doing one-on-one with. (Jack: Right.) You could do one-on-one with a person for seven years and then after seven years, he says, "See ya!" So, I think we do one-on-one with lots of friends simultaneously. There's one guy I haven't met within six months; but, he's still on my prayer list and when he calls, we'll get together. So, we're doing this with a lot of people, but here's a couple of guidelines, and number one is: associate with nonbelievers. We believers tend to be pretty good at isolating ourselves so that we've got a Christian car mechanic, a Christian plumber, a Christian hairdresser... let's find some non-believing friends. 1 Corinthians 5:9-11 is overlooked, and Paul says, "I wrote to you in my letter not to associate with immoral people, I did not at all mean with the immoral people of this world, or with covetous or swindlers or idolaters, for then you'd have to go out of the world. But actually, I wrote to you not to associate with any so-called brother, if he is immoral." So, Paul here is advocating, "Hey! Be with non-believers!" not the

immoral non-believers, but non-believers who are searching... just normal people. So, associate with non-believers. I think that is really key and Jesus was criticized for that: Luke 15:2, "This man eats with sinners." I'd like that on my tombstone Jack, "Here lies Scott Morton, ate with sinners."

So that's number one and number two is: your life witness is not enough, there's got to be words. Now, maybe you've heard the saying, it's quite popular now: "Share the Gospel and if necessary, use words." That's going around and it's attributed to St. Francis of Assisi, although there's no record he actually said it, but that's who gets the credit. I've thought about that and it's very true: we must have credibility with non-believers; our life must speak of Christ before our words. If all we have is words and no life, that's going nowhere. But I asked LeRoy Eims, a Navigator pioneer, years ago before he died, I said, "LeRoy what about this?" And Leroy was an evangelist. He seemed fearless in front of people; but, he was just like us. "What about this LeRoy? Is it life only, or is it 'preach the Gospel and if necessary use words?' What about that?" He said, "Well, words will be necessary." And, Jack, thinking of how I came to Christ- words had to be. It takes more than just the life witness, but the life witness is key.

And then the third thing is: share the Gospel, not the baggage. Now, this is a mistake we all make, and it's easy to make. We want people to start attending our church, speak up about abortion, speak up about pornography, join our political party... those things are great causes but they're not the Gospel. We need to stick with the Gospel: Christ and Him crucified. Okay, so that's a couple of... our lives ought to look like that, as we relate to non-believers.

Jack: Yeah, keeping the main thing the main thing.

Scott: Yup, that's right.

Jack: Well I appreciate that, Scott. You know as you're with

people in an intentional way, how do you know... what are some ways that you have a sense that, "Hey, I'm really helping. I'm making a difference."

Scott: I don't know that I always know that, and sometimes when I think I have made a difference, not much happened; and then sometimes when I think I didn't make a difference, God did great things. I think we have to assume that if we are with someone and we are engaging in friendship and sharing the Bible, that some good is going to come out of it. "God's Word does not return void," it says in Isaiah. So when I meet with someone, Jack, I have a few guidelines after to evaluate that - ok, I had an hour with them, what do I look for in that meeting? And one of the things I look for is, did we open the Bible together? Even with a non-believer, because the Bible's words are going to be stronger. You know that famous verse in Hebrews: for the word of Scott is quick and powerful? (Jack and Scott both laugh). "The Word of GOD is quick and powerful!" I remember one time I was with a returning missionary who'd had a tough time overseas and he was discouraged, he came to Minneapolis and I met him at the airport and he was down. So I took him to a really nice restaurant- White Castle- and we had about four hours together, Jack, and I was giving him all my wisdom and listening and asking questions and sharing stuff; and finally, at the end I said, "Is there anything I've said that's been of any value at all?" He said, "Well not really, no; but, there was that one verse you shared- what was that again?" And Jack, I'm ashamed to say for four hours I shared only one verse of Scripture and that's what he wanted to stick to! So, I look for: have we opened the Bible? Secondly: did I listen? One time, I was with a guy and I talked for an hour and then he said, "Oh I gotta go." And I said, "What can I pray for you?" He said, "Well, my Dad's in the hospital." I missed it; I could have picked that up at the beginning of the hour. I missed it. Listen. So share the Word, listen. I think another one that I like is: did we laugh together? I don't have a

Bible verse on that particularly, but if we laugh together, then I know that there's some bonding going on. And number four: did I meet a felt need? Did I talk to some area where he would (be met), or did I just do stuff I wanted to talk about? And then, finally: did we pray together? Maybe not every time, and sometimes it's not appropriate. With non-believers, I don't usually pray together. But, sometimes I'll just walk them out to the car and put my hand around their shoulder and say, "Just before you go, let me have a..." and when I say "pray," I mean... a "quick prayer," I don't mean an hour prayer; it's maybe twenty seconds.

Jack: Well that's good. Before you go into these, I think that's a great way to enter out. Boy! Even in developing that relationship, in all of our relationships, we ought to be asking some of those questions as well. But Scott, help our listeners understand, before you go into a time like this, what goes on in your mind? What do you pray before you get started- you know, as you're in the car, you turn the ignition off and you're ready to walk into a restaurant or you're ready to engage- talk to us about what you pray?

Scott: Well, you're assuming I do pray, thank you. (Laughter from both) Jack, sometimes in the busyness of life, I'm on my way to the meeting late, as per usual, dodging traffic, giving the angry horn to the pastor's wife who's just ahead of me, now I gotta switch churches. Yeah, I confess I'm not there, but I try to, before I enter that meeting, say, "Lord, I am exhausted, I'm tired, I didn't really work this outright, but I have an idea of what I should share today. Would you put your hand on it? Would you give me wisdom and would you give me courage?" Wisdom to know what to do, courage to have the guts to do it by His grace. And so, I confess I often walk in and I feel unprepared, but I almost wonder if that's normal; because sometimes, when I've done a thorough job of preparation, I've prepared for the wrong topic. Now, I'm not saying don't prepare; let's prepare. I've got my topics in

mind, but I think we have to go in being pretty flexible. So I've got an idea. I've got a plan. I've got a verse. I've got an illustration that I want to share; but, I try to be flexible for the need of the moment.

Jack: That's great, that's great. And it really does demonstrate our dependence on him. (Scott: Absolutely.) Because He is going to. Who knows where things are going to land, what they're struggling with, where they're at so...

Scott: Well, there are half a dozen or so topics that I really want to talk about. Maybe we can talk about that another time, Jack, with developing a fifty-minute way of passing on a life message that you have. So there are some specific topics we need to cover with people, so I'm ready with those.

Jack: Good!

Scott: But, I'm not always sure which one is appropriate at the time.

Jack: Yeah. That's good. Wow! Well, we've already carved out another podcast just sitting here on the first one with Scott Morton! But boy, Scott, thank you so much for being here with us today and challenging us. I don't know about our listening audience, but just being here with you today, in terms of engaging relationally with folks who don't know you, it's been a real challenge for me. So, thank you for taking the time to do this.

Scott: Thank you. And let me just end with this, Jack, that discipling others and evangelism is not a formula and there are times when you will just be heartsick because the person you were going to meet didn't show up, or they didn't seem responsive, or they don't call you back. That's normal; don't be discouraged, keep going. God will give you people as you are ready to share your life with them.

Jack: Amen, Amen. Well you'll hear and you'll see in our

notes, Scott's book on *Down to Earth Discipling* we'll make that available for you to get a glimpse of and figure out where you can order it, so we'll be able to do that on the show notes as well. But thank you, Scott, again for the time and we look forward to our next episode.

Scott: Alright, Jack. Me too!

Jack: Well today we've learned that a vital part of the discipleship process comes with the on-going process of evangelism, not just a one-time event. This process hinges on intentional relationships with believers and non-believers alike.

We hope you've enjoyed this episode and feel encouraged and equipped! For more on Scott you can visit his website at Scottmorton.net And for more from The Apprentice Approach, including resources, our blog, and to sign up for weekly emails, visit our website TheApprenticeApproach.org, and if you haven't subscribed to The Apprentice Approach Podcast in iTunes, do it today!

Until next time, this is your host, Jack McQueeney, believing God for generations of men and women like you!

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