

ENGAGING SPIRITUAL CONVERSATIONS

Put Down

I talked with a man who faithfully cares for his aging Christian mother. Seeking to encourage him, I told him I prayed every week for his mother. I explained how I asked God how He wants me to pray for people who are shut-in. For example, I sensed God saying I should pray for our senior adults to experience His peace and His presence.

“That must be a heavy load you carry,” he commented.

“I believe God helps His people,” I responded. Then I cited an instance where God nudged me to become more like Him.

He interrupted, “You sure seem talkative today.”

“What do you mean?” I inquired.

“What are you getting out of this—talking about yourself?”

Again I asked what he meant.

“You have a good day. Good bye.” He hung up the phone.

I felt the sting of his criticism. As I cradled the phone I wondered if I talked too much. He and I visited via phone every three to four weeks for over two years. Never before had he rebuked me. What was different about this time? I was testifying to God’s involvement in my life. As I looked back I may not have been as outspoken with him about the Lord formerly.

Early on people told me he was resistant to spiritual matters. I had forgotten. Our relationship seemed to allow for open communication about his situation and my concern for him and his mother. To talk

about God's ministry seemed natural and acceptable. Clearly I misread him.

The abrupt ending of the conversation served as a censor. I became more mindful of my other conversations. Am I too talkative? I do talk about the Lord. And I want to continue to do so. My conversations reflect my relationship with the Lord.

I struggle with the tension between not wanting to be pushy and not wanting to become hesitant or silent about God's role in my life.

How will I talk to him next time I call about his mother? Our relationship most certainly will be different. How should I proceed?