

Title: “Is *this* what you Christians do?”

May 8, 2023

Greetings all,

I just wrote out another true story for a project I’m working on and I thought the rest of you would enjoy it.

Blessings,

Dr. Lehman/Karl

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Is this what you Christians do?:

Daniel, a young man in his mid-twenties, came to me for psychiatric care for a miserable combination of anxiety and depression. He told me that he had “tried everything,” including a number of different combinations of psychotherapy and medications. He was deeply discouraged, and even though he was an agnostic and knew that I integrated faith into my work, he was in my office because people he knew well and trusted had strongly encouraged him to try working with me before giving up all hope.

After hearing his story and asking questions to clarify diagnostic issues and details regarding previous treatment, I offered my thoughts: “The therapy approach that I find to be most effective includes a major faith component. I realize that you don’t believe in God, but I would recommend that we try this approach anyway. It usually works, even for people who aren’t religious, and when it does work it’s less painful and more effective than any other psychotherapy modality that I am aware of.” And then I briefly explained the Immanuel Approach, and described exactly what it would look like for us to use it as the psychotherapy component of his treatment plan. I ended with, “So my proposal is that we just give it a try and see what happens.”

His response was something along the lines of, “Hell doctor Lehman, I’ve already tried everything else and I still feel terrible. I’m gonna shoot myself in the head if you can’t help me. I’ll try anything – I’ll talk to the Pillsbury doughboy if you think it’ll do any good.”

Thankfully, he had a very positive experience with the Immanuel Approach. First of all, he was able to perceive Jesus clearly and able to establish a strong interactive connection. It was actually kind of funny when we went through the initial steps for the first time. After picturing himself inside of a positive memory, describing the details, and then inviting Jesus to be with him, he suddenly got a startled expression on his face and exclaimed, “Whoa! *Jesus* is in my memory!” With just a tiny bit of humor in my voice, I commented, “But I thought you didn’t believe in God or Jesus.” To which he responded, “Yeah, I know I said that, but Jesus is in my memory – He’s standing right in front of me!” Still with a tiny bit of humor in my voice, I asked, “How do you know it’s Jesus, since you’ve never met Him before and you didn’t even believe He was real until a minute ago?” To which he promptly replied (as if he were talking to a slow-learner who was struggling with the basics from second-grade Sunday school), “Dude! When the Son of God is standing in front of you, you know who He is!!”

We asked for guidance and help after established a connection with Jesus at the beginning of each session, and the Lord led Daniel to a series of traumatic memories that turned out to be the underlying source of his anxiety and depression. All of his anxiety and depression symptoms decreased dramatically and progressively as we worked with Jesus to resolve the traumas.

Daniel became increasingly encouraged and grateful with each session, and toward the end of the fourth or fifth session, he suddenly paused, look me right in the eyes, and asked, “So is *this* what you Christians do?” I asked for clarification, “I’m sorry, I’m not sure I understand what you mean?” He continued, with this poignant expression of astonishment, curiosity, and wonder on his face and in his voice, “This thing we’ve been doing in these sessions – this thing we do with Jesus – is *this* what you Christians do?”

I stumbled a bit in surprise, but eventually answered, “Yeah. I mean, there’s more to Christianity than just this piece, but this is the most important piece.” And then he asked, “So if I’m a Christian, can I keep doing this?” When I answered, “Yes, of course,” he promptly responded with, “So can you let me be a Christian? How do I be a Christian – what do I have to do to be a Christian? Can you help me be a Christian, so that I can keep doing this thing with Jesus?” I had a bit of a lump in my throat, so it was a moment or two before I was able to reply: “Absolutely. We can take care of that right now if you want to.”

Does one even get credit for sharing the gospel when it’s this easy? I couldn’t help wondering, “How many people are there who would happily follow Jesus if they could just meet Him? If they could just experience His tangible, living, interactive, loving, personal friendship presence?”