LEADER NOTES

Brockley Homegroup November 2024

* Please make sure in advance, that you can show the YouTube video.
* Is there somebody that you can delegate to prepare and lead one of the questions?
* How can you make this homegroup different from the last one?
* Have you thought about arranging a Christmas social with a particular emphasis on bringing along non-Christian friends / partners / neighbours?

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Dr Rosalind Picard has a degree, a Masters, PhD’s in electrical engineering and computer Science from MIT. (Massachusetts Institute of Technology)

She has been a member of the faculty at the MIT Media Laboratory since 1991, with tenure since 1998 and a full professorship since 2005.

In 2022 she was awarded the International Lombardy Prize for Computer Science Research, which carries a €1 million award, which she donated to support digital health and neurology research to help save the lives of people with epilepsy and children susceptible to sudden infant death syndrome.

Video link <https://youtu.be/c-z-sHBbK88> or type in the YouTube search box 4K Top Scientist Rosalind Picard

TRANSCRIPT

*My views at the time were that Christians and actually all religions, I was pretty antagonistic towards were people who really didn't know their science or maybe they needed a crutch or something.*

*I really didn't think they were that smart.*

*Then I started to realise that many such people were super smart.*

*They challenged me to read the best-selling book of all time.*

*As I was reading the Bible, against my desires, I was started to change my mind about some things.*

*Then I thought, oh gosh, if this book is influencing me to change my mind towards Christianity or toward belief in God, maybe I should study other world religions too. So I started to do that - and as I started learning more and more about different world religions ...meeting people from those religions and going to temples and mosques and others I started to realise that, not only did I have a lot to learn, but I was on a journey.*

*I got dragged off to some Christian churches, which I resisted in the beginning and found somewhere I could ask questions – being able to ask questions is very important.*

*I started to realise that religion was not at all what I thought it was. I found some really interesting and very attractive elements that were very historically verified also, not at all what I expected.*

*As I learned about that, I changed my viewpoint gradually, from an atheist, to an agnostic, to a theist, to someone who actually believes that that the historical Jesus in the New Testament, what's written about him is true.*

*I was challenged to not only to believe this, but to put it to practice. That's where things started to really make a difference in my life and the real reason I'm here right now, spending time talking about something like this as opposed to just my research is because it has made a huge difference in my life.*

*Part of the Christian faith, is that there is a gift for everybody in the world whether you are raised Christian or Hindu or Muslim or Buddhist or Atheist or any of a long list of backgrounds there's a gift for everybody there.*

*When I accepted that gift it made a huge difference in my life, for the better - a big improvement. I didn't realise it needed so much improving at the time - those around me saw the difference.*

*Today it is my source of strength an amazing source of peace and joy and wisdom*

Rosalind Picard.

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**Q1**  
When somebody tells the story of how they became a Christian it is sometimes called a ‘testimony’. What did you think of Rosalind Picard’s story? Have you heard others?

**A1**  
I think it is one of the best that I have heard in just over 3 minutes.

**Q2**  
What part did Christians play in Rosalind’s story?

**A2**  
Christians around her invited her to church – but she wasn’t very keen to go. Some Christians took time to listen to her questions and took them seriously.

**Q3**  
Do you talk to other people about your Christian faith? What do you find hard / easy about it?

**A3**  
Most of us have fears about talking about our Christian faith. (1) We don’t like being ‘preached at’ by others – and we don’t want to do that to others (2) We are afraid that it will lead to disagreements and falling out with people (3) We are afraid that people might think we are strange, stupid, bigoted and judgmental.

**Q4**  
Can you think of a particular individual who is not a Christian, who you could share this 3 minute video with? How do you think they might react?

**A4**  
If we can’t think of anybody – maybe we don’t have enough non-Christian friends. If you can think of somebody – are you willing to share it? If not – why are you reluctant?

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***13****Who is going to harm you if you are eager to do good?****14****But even if you should suffer for what is right, you are blessed. ‘Do not fear their threats[*[*b*](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1%20Peter%203&version=NIVUK#fen-NIVUK-30439b)*]; do not be frightened.’[*[*c*](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1%20Peter%203&version=NIVUK#fen-NIVUK-30439c)*]****15****But in your hearts revere Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect,****16****keeping a clear conscience, so that those who speak maliciously against your good behaviour in Christ may be ashamed of their slander.*  1 Peter 3 verses 13-16

This is my favourite passage about Christian witness / testimony and sharing your faith.  
Did you notice the little superscript [b] after ‘do not fear their threats’. The word translated ‘threat’ is phobon (which is the root from which get the word phobia) A legitimate alternative translation is ‘do not fear what they fear.’

**Q5**  
Make a list of what you think are the main fears of people who aren’t Christians

**A5**  
(1) death (2) illness (3) poverty (4) loneliness (5) losing their independence

**Q6**  
All Christians have a responsibility to share their faith. What practical advice to we find in these verses to help us. ( I think there are 6 answers)

**A6**  
(1) *Gentleness and respect*Speak with gentleness and respect (v15 – 16) This is very important. The way we say things is part of the message. Gentleness means that we will not try to dominate the conversation. If we find ourselves talking more that 50% of the time, we should ask a question and listen to the answer carefully. Respect for the other person means that we genuinely try and understand their opinions, values and life-choices – and try and understand the reasons behind them. Christian witness is not about criticising people for their lifestyle, or arguing with them about their point of view.

(2) *always be prepared (v15)*  
opportunities to speak will come – but we can only make the most of them if we have thought about it carefully in advance and practiced what we want to say. Are you prepared?

(3)  
*everyone who asks you (v15)*Do you see that the questions come from them? Peter is not picturing a ‘salesman’ type spiel – where we are trying to tell people stuff that they don’t really want to hear. No. Peter is picturing us answering questions that they are asking. Are people asking you questions about your faith?

(4) *Live in a way that puzzles people and invites questions.*Because we do not fear what they fear – Peter anticipates that our lives will be radically different to those of the surrounding culture – and that this in turn will lead to being asked questions. Is this happening? Are our ambitions and aspirations, our worries and our fears – very similar to the world around – or so radically different that questions are inevitable.

(5) *Doing good(v13) and living lives of integrity (keeping a clear conscience)* are avital part of our testimony. If people look at us and see hypocrisy – they are unlikely to listen to what we have to say. If our beliefs don’t lead to good behaviour – what recommendation is that?

(6) *in your heart set apart Christ as Lord.*Powerful witness springs from a strong inner life of the heart. Making sure that we honour Christ as Lord, means living in a way that puts him first and pleases him. What Jesus thinks of us – has to be the opinion that matters most.

*Leave time for sharing and prayer. Try and relate it to the study rather than just praying for ill people.*