

But blessed is the one who trusts in the Lord, whose confidence is in him. They will be like a tree planted by the water that sends out its roots by the stream. It does not fear when heat comes; its leaves are always green. It has no worries in a year of drought and never fails to bear fruit. (Jer 17:7-8 NIV)



[God] made known to us the mystery of his will according to his good pleasure, which he purposed in Christ, to be put into effect when the times reach their fulfillment—to bring unity to all things in heaven and on earth under Christ. (Eph 1:9-10 NIV)

What is the story of a tree?

A connection between Sky and Ground.

A tree takes nothing but air and water and makes it into 40 tons of wood, leaves, and roots. It soaks up hundreds of gallons of water and makes thunderstorms.

What's the story of people?

A connection between Heaven and Earth.

People are always reaching for Heavenly possibilities while planted firmly in Earthly realities. Jesus can bring these two together. We can help him.

It Starts With Empathetic Listening: A lot of people struggle to share their faith because they're not sure what to say. But sharing your faith can start without saying anything at all. By listening faithfully for **aspiration** and **situation**, and holding that with someone, you open up space for God to do something. Like a tree, you're connecting heaven and earth, and when you do that you'd be surprised how open people are to hearing how faith in Jesus could make that connection for them as well. *Can you listen for...*

aspiration

*what people want
who they want to be
when/where they want to be in life*

situation

*what makes demands on them
how they are required to respond
to what extent is their success necessary*

This is just being a good friend, but it can also be the start of a spiritual journey together. Give it a try with your friends, family, neighbors and co-workers. When you've got the hang of it, and want to know what to do next, talk to your pastor, group leader, or email director@campdeerpark.org

Empathetic Listening is one of the core skills in The Journey Map discipleship-through-mission framework. Camp Deerpark uses this framework for ministry and mission across ages and activities. If you'd like to know more, shoot us an email and we'll be glad to help.

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<https://campdeerpark.org/story-of-a-tree>