

# FAQ for 5 Thresholds Training

## “What is the difference between Curious and Open?”

Someone who is curious is merely interested in the information, and their questions tend to be academic or intellectual. They aren’t asking with a desire to impact their personal life in any way. Once they are open, they are willing to share about something real in their life. The conversation is no longer academic. They usually want to grow in a particular area of their life, but this may not have anything to do with God.

## “What is the difference between Curious and Seeking?”

For a seeker, the journey of exploration is personal. They want to grow. They want answers to their questions. When they ask about Jesus, it is not merely academic. They want to know who Jesus or God will be for them. Again, someone who is curious is merely interested in the information, and their questions tend to be academic or intellectual. They aren’t asking with a desire to impact their personal life in any way.

## “Can you go backwards in the Thresholds?”

Yes! For example, seeking requires a lot of energy. Often after 3 months of exploring Jesus, there can be fatigue or plateauing of interest. The person might move from Seeking back to Open or merely Curious. We then meet them where they are and re-engage with them at an earlier Threshold.

## “How do you contextualize for different ethnic groups? How about working with internationals?”

This is a very important question. We have found that the moves of each Threshold stay consistent (the move from distrust to trust in the Trust Threshold or from closed to change to change in the Open Threshold.) But, there are many ways that someone may express trust or openness that has much to do with their background and culture. For example, a best practice in Native ministry is to welcome non-Christians to worship Jesus with the Native drum. Using this traditional approach to Jesus helps them become open to change. This is highly contextual.

We have also found that many international students start their journey largely in Threshold 2, Curious. This is because the experience of being a student in a different country helps students to have a posture of curiosity. Here is a [PowerPoint](#) that contextualizes the Thresholds for internationals.

## “How does Gen Z respond to the 5 Thresholds?”

When they first go through our training, they sometimes get a little confused trying to remember all the words and categories, but they respond very well to the practical steps. They want to be good friends, and friendship evangelism is motivating for them. We see Gen Z non-Christians move through the Thresholds just as past generations have. They are open to prayer and to the Holy Spirit. Please offer to pray with Gen Z and let God to the rest.

## “Why is the 3rd threshold (Open) the hardest?”

It can be very painful to admit that I need to change. Humans can be very stubborn. For the evangelist, the 3rd Threshold can feel hardest because the relational dynamics shift. For example, it often feels rather risky to ask questions to develop curiosity in the second Threshold. But it can feel much riskier to offer up your own experiences of being vulnerable with Jesus and invite your conversation partner to join you in vulnerably asking Jesus for real help in their lives. This heart-to-heart openness is beautiful, and difficult. In addition, some people stay in the Open Threshold for months or years. Sometimes people avoid an honest self-assessment at all costs. Change can be threatening, confusing, and upsetting.

## “Is the 3rd Threshold open to Jesus, open to God or just open emotionally?”

The important pivot in the 3rd Threshold is when someone moves from being content with their lives “as-is” toward realizing that something needs to change for them. They are more candid about some growing sense of discontent. They might be vaguely dissatisfied, or it could be a specific crisis in their family or personal life. Sometimes this discontent comes with a new openness to Jesus or God, but for others it is just “Openness.” It is wise for us to help them evaluate how effective their variety of remedies are, and compare how effective Jesus has been in our personal lives to address these practical issues.

## “How do you help someone count the cost without scaring them away?”

Deciding to follow Jesus is a little like getting married. How would you feel if you went to a wedding, and the groom gave the bride partial vows? The groom says, “I will give up some of my girlfriends, I will focus on you a few days a week, and I will stay with you as long as your sickness does not last too long.” (They boo and hiss) Exactly, we would be offended

because he is communicating that the bride is cheap, she is not worth full vows. Jesus is the same way. Jesus is worth our full vows. Jesus is not cheap. He knows he is worth our full lives. I, for one, am grateful that Jesus is worth my all.

## “What happens when non-Christians see the Thresholds? Do they feel like a project?”

We have found that non-Christians are motivated by the Thresholds. They see the words Trust, Curious, Open, Searching, and Following as positive and worth aspiring towards. Allowing our non-Christian friends to select a word that represents their journey and a word that represents how they want to grow can help them own their spiritual growth and transform your partnership. People tend to feel like projects when we treat them that way. Helping our friends take ownership of their spiritual journey through the Thresholds builds trust.

## “What happens when people get preoccupied with ‘discerning the right Threshold?’”

It is tempting to try to “get it right” and focus on perfectly discerning where our friends are among the thresholds. This misses the point of the 5 Thresholds. The 5 Thresholds is a tool to increase our love and empathy for the people around us and gives us wisdom about the different ways we may partner with them in their spiritual journey. There is no perfect way to move through the Thresholds nor is there a perfect way to partner with our friends. Instead, use the 5 Thresholds as clues to help you lovingly and creatively encourage your friend toward faith in Jesus. “Love covers a multitude of mistakes.” Love your friends and take some risks.

## “What is a Threshold? Why are we using this dumb word?”

We borrow this metaphor from construction. You put a threshold as a transition piece between rooms. You cross a threshold when you cross through a doorway into a new room. A threshold helps us to picture the movement from one “room” of our spiritual journey to the next. It allows us to imagine a non-Christian’s experiences as they approach a new threshold of faith as well as their experience once they have made the move across the threshold. This metaphor is helpful to communicate journey and progress.